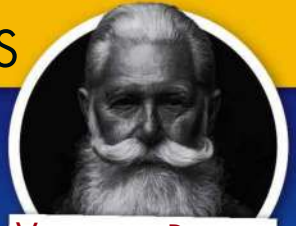
JANE AUSTEN 250 EXPLORE YOUR HAMPSHIRE ROOTS

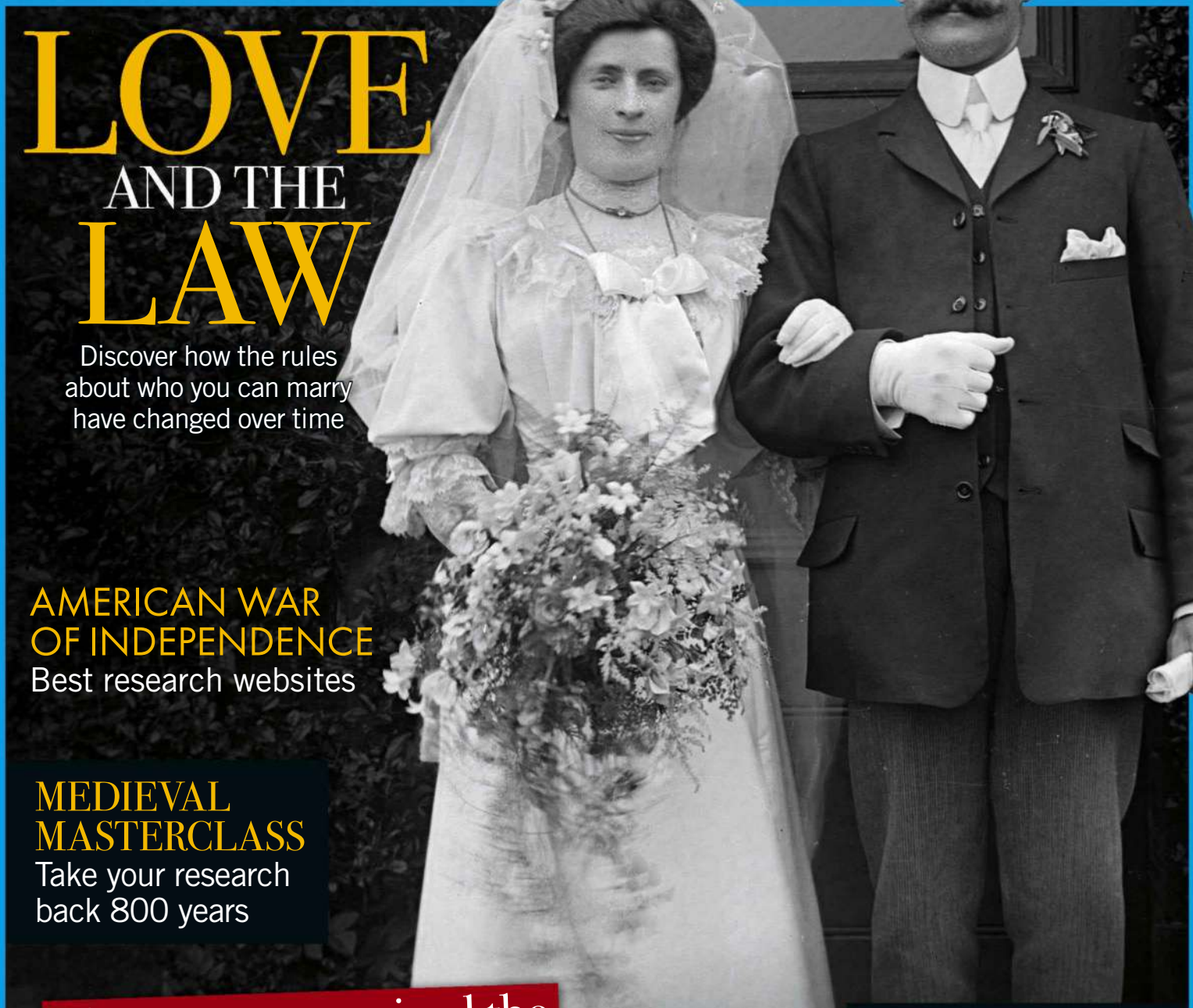
BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING FAMILY HISTORY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 229 APRIL 2025 £5.75

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE?®



VICTORIAN BEARDS WHAT THEY REVEAL



LOVE AND THE LAW

Discover how the rules about who you can marry have changed over time

AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Best research websites

MEDIEVAL MASTERCLASS

Take your research back 800 years

My ancestor survived the Cutty Sark's voyage from hell

MILITARY POLICE

Find Redcaps' records

EASTER TRADITIONS

From bottle kicking to chocolate eggs

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- How to create a genogram for free
- Future visions: Ideal Home Show at 100
- A WW1 magazine from the trenches

DISCOVER THE WHOLE PICTURE

When you explore your family tree, you find names, dates and places. But it's the extra details that truly reveal your family story.

Ancestry has a huge range of historical records, and with an average of two million added every day, there's always more to discover. So even when you think you know your family, they can keep surprising you.

ancestry®
Bring your backstory to life™

Do you have a fascinating family story to share?

We'd love to hear about your discoveries, email us at *yourstory@ancestry.co.uk*

Welcome

Sarah's Top Tip

Explore the online catalogues of local archives for gems relevant to your tree

When working on a family tree, it is very tempting to just stick to the core records, and those easily available digitally. However, there are some amazing hidden gems tucked away in archives up and down the country that we might be missing out on. I was really moved by this month's 'Gem from the Archive' on **page 68**. I have medics in my family who have served in three wars and, if any of them had served with the West Riding Field Ambulance Service, I would have gone up to Sheffield City Archives in a heartbeat to pore over the magazine that had been put together by these talented young men.

There's nothing more central to a family tree than the core life events of birth, marriage and death. However, while birth and death happen to us all, marriage can be a little more complicated. One area that can cause confusion relates to the legality of marriage. Why couldn't you marry your brother's widow, and when did that change? Has it always been legal to marry your first cousin? On **page 14** legal historian Rebecca Probert answers these questions and more. I certainly learnt a thing or two!

We've also had some great fun this month exploring men's facial hair in the 19th century (**page 18**). It has definitely made me look at my family photographs with a new eye. Although I have few from the Victorian era, I can see the older gentlemen in later photos still sporting the whiskers that were so popular at the time.

I also enjoyed the article on feet of fines on **page 38**. I tend to see them as a tool for medieval research, because it is usually medieval collections that record societies have transcribed, so I was fascinated to see that they go right up to the 1830s. I've got a few 18th-century brick walls at the moment, so maybe a trip to The National Archives is called for. If you've got any brick walls, or photo queries, please do email them to *wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk*. We're here to help.

Sarah

Sarah Williams Editor
sarah.williams@ourmedia.co.uk

Get In Touch

Advertising
t 0117 476 7313
e *andy.williams@ourmedia.co.uk*

Editorial & Website Queries
t 0117 300 8621
e *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Magazine App Support
w *ourmediaapps.co.uk/digital-contact-form*

Q&A Queries
e *wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk*

Subscriptions Help & FAQs
t 03330 162120*
t +44 1604 973728 (overseas)
w *ourmediashop.com/contact-us*
w *ourmediashop.com/faqs*

*UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed-line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.

Contributors

Rebecca Probert
Rebecca is a professor of law and leading expert in the history of marriage. On **page 14** she looks at the thorny issue of how the Church and the law controlled who you could marry.

Alun Withey
Alun is a senior lecturer at the University of Exeter specialising in the history of medicine and the body. He writes about beards on **page 18**, and blogs at **dralun.wordpress.com**.

Caroline Roope
A regular writer for us (and self-proclaimed history nerd), this month Caroline turns her attention to Easter traditions from bottle kicking to chocolate eggs – see **page 56**.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/A BRIDE AND GROOM POSE OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A HOUSE IN HELLIDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, c1896-c1920

CONTENTS
APRIL 2025

FEATURES

14 Love And The Law ON THE COVER
Legal historian Rebecca Probert explains how the law surrounding marriage between cousins and other relations has changed over the years

18 Victorian Beards ON THE COVER
Alun Withey traces the evolution of men's facial hair during the 19th century, and reveals what it can tell us about our ancestors

51 Ideal Home Show ON THE COVER
The Ideal Home Show has highlighted and predicted trends since 1908, says Deborah Sugg Ryan

56 Easter Traditions ON THE COVER
From bottle kicking to chocolate eggs, Caroline Roope discusses the origins of our Easter customs

RESEARCH ADVICE

28 Focus On ON THE COVER
Phil Tomaselli explains the proud history of the Royal Military Police, and shares his expert advice for finding your relation's service in their records

35 Best Websites ON THE COVER
Jonathan Scott reveals the best online resources for researching the American War of Independence

38 Record Masterclass ON THE COVER
Alan Crosby introduces records of property ownership that were first created during the medieval period

54 Tech Tips ON THE COVER
Build genograms for free with Nick Peers' guide

YOUR RESEARCH

24 Reader Story ON THE COVER
"My great great grandfather survived the *Cutty Sark*'s voyage from hell," says Cathy MacLeod

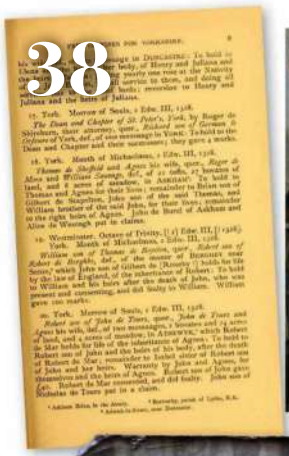
62 Eureka Moment
Linda Farrar has uncovered Catholic ancestors who bravely defied persecution because of their faith

74 Family Hero
Italian immigrants to the USA, including Audra Crans-Henderson's great grandmother, faced huge challenges

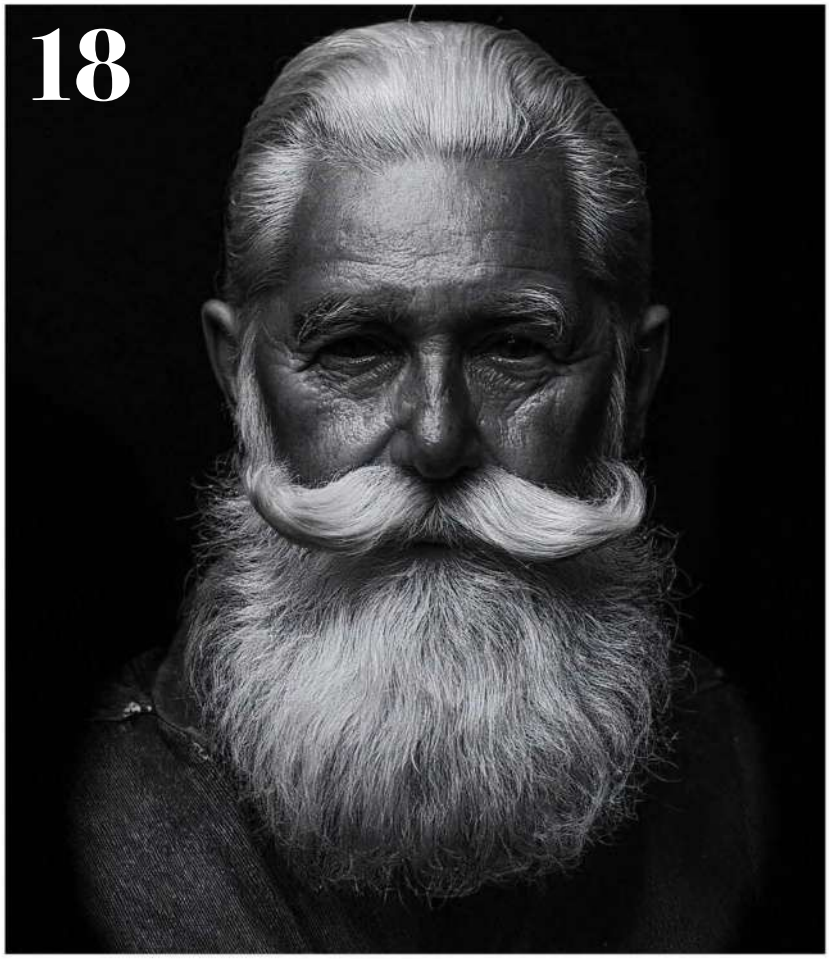
REGULARS

6 Letters
Your ideas, comments and advice

9 What's On
Online and in-person talks, shows and exhibitions



GETTY IMAGES



SUBSCRIPTION OFFER 22

Subscribe Today And Get A Month's FREE Trial

10 News
All of the latest developments, including The National Archives' plans to use AI to transcribe records

13 Off The Record
How Easter affected our ancestors' lives 200 years ago

43 Q&A
From dating a mysterious wedding photo to uncovering a relation's service in the Royal Air Force during the First World War, our experts smash your brick walls

49 Your Projects
Rosemary Collins talks to a genealogy group from Woking who have researched a piece of embroidery

61 *Wdytya? Magazine* Shop
Back issues, magazine storage and certificate binders

64 Around Britain ON THE COVER
Jonathan Scott joins the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth with a round-up of resources from her home county of Hampshire

68 Gem From The Archive ON THE COVER
Tim Knebel from Sheffield City Archives shares a magazine created in the trenches of the Western Front

GUIDE

70 Books & Digital Picks
This month's family history inspiration

72 TV & Radio
Remembering the Holocaust – and RMS *Titanic*

WELLCOME COLLECTION / UNP/JAMES NEWELL / GETTY IMAGES

Letters

Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*
Write to *WDYTYA? Magazine*, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST

WIN an AncestryDNA test kit from **ancestry.co.uk**
WORTH £79

ancestryDNA

The writer of our star letter wins an AncestryDNA test **worth £79** – so drop us a line and share your thoughts with us.

Timeline Treasures

With reference to Chloe O'Shea's article on timelines in the February issue, I thought I'd share my own way of using timelines in my research.

I find timelines a superb way of separating individual ancestors into bite-size pieces. I've taken the whole thing a stage further and have produced individual stories on characters that I find interesting. This helps piece together why I am me, and why I ended up living where I do.

I've produced rough layouts in InDesign (I'm an ex-magazine designer) with the purpose of keeping me entertained, and also in the hope that my sons will one day be interested in their family history.

I split the life stories into 10-year parts following whatever information I can get after each census, and added lifestyle images where I could, including certificates of birth, marriage and death, then and now pictures of houses, and newspaper articles.

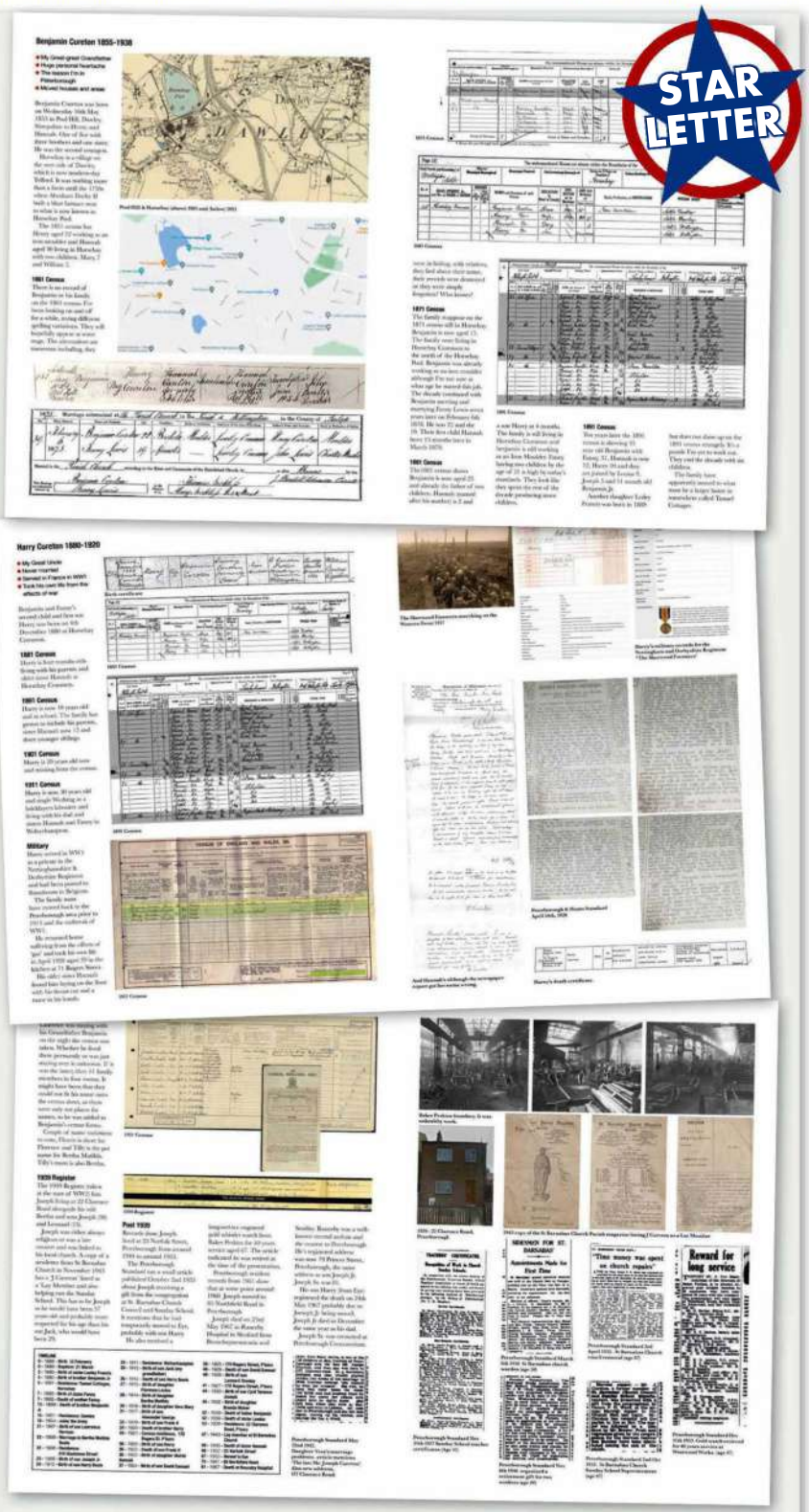
I started off with a gentleman called Benjamin Cureton from Shropshire, who was the reason I was born and still live in Peterborough. He was an ironmonger in the mid-to-late 1800s, and had to follow the work.

I've created pages for a few of his family members and the more I discover and write about him, the more I find his story heartbreaking. He lost his wife as she gave birth to his daughter. One son committed suicide due to the effects of being gassed in the First World War. The aforementioned daughter disappeared from the records until I found out that she had emigrated to New Zealand and had produced two sons, who both became Second World War airmen and both died in plane crashes. The list goes on. I seem to be able to find information for the older ancestors and not the more recent ones, but I'll persist with the detective work.

It's an ongoing project, one I do when the mood takes me. It helps me understand. I am forever updating the pages, but I thought your readers might be interested in my version of timelines.

Mark Cureton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Editor Replies **These look great Mark, thank you for sharing them. I'm planning on putting together a family history 'book' for my children, nephews and nieces, so I need all of the inspiration I can get!**



Mark has put his design skills to good use and created these amazing timelines

Nursing Niggles

I enjoyed the article about researching female ancestors in the March issue. However, the section about nursing records is slightly misleading,

First, the British Nursing Association did not actually train nurses – it was a register of some trained nurses, and merely recorded where nurses said they had trained (so discrepancies were noted at the time).

These records can be researched via the excellent website Pioneering Nurses: **kingscollections.org/nurses/home**.

Second, the Nightingale Fund did indeed train nurses – but only at St Thomas' Hospital in London. Their records may be in the online collections you suggested.
Sarah Rogers, by email

Editor Replies **Thank you for writing in and sharing that excellent website Sarah.**

Mind The Gap!

Lorraine Taylor's letter about timelines in your February issue raises important points. She wonders "why there are gaps of some years between children" in family records, and highlights matters such as war and disease to explain the unexpected absences of men. In recent research I was surprised to see that my second cousin, Albert Stokes (born 1873), was missing from the 1901 census, leaving his wife Annie at home in Leicester with daughter Nora, aged five, and a relative. It felt like something of a long shot to look for him in records of the Second Boer War (1899–1902), but there he was, serving in the Imperial Yeomanry. Nothing in my research had suggested that Albert, a metalworker, had seen military service, let alone in such a prestigious regiment!

However, it is surely infant mortality that accounts for the vast majority of those gaps between children that Lorraine mentions. It is so easy to underestimate this factor – certainly I did in my early research. In the absence of modern medical treatments, infancy and early childhood was a perilous time until well into the 20th century, even in the middle and upper classes. Looking at the family I have mentioned, I find in the 1911 census that Albert and Annie Stokes had lost four of their children and another was to die later that year, leaving only four who survived into adulthood.

So, what I have learnt about those troubling gaps is not to have preconceptions about what an ancestor might or might not have been doing, and always to bear in mind the possibility of death in infancy and early childhood.
David Stokes, Ilkley, West Yorkshire

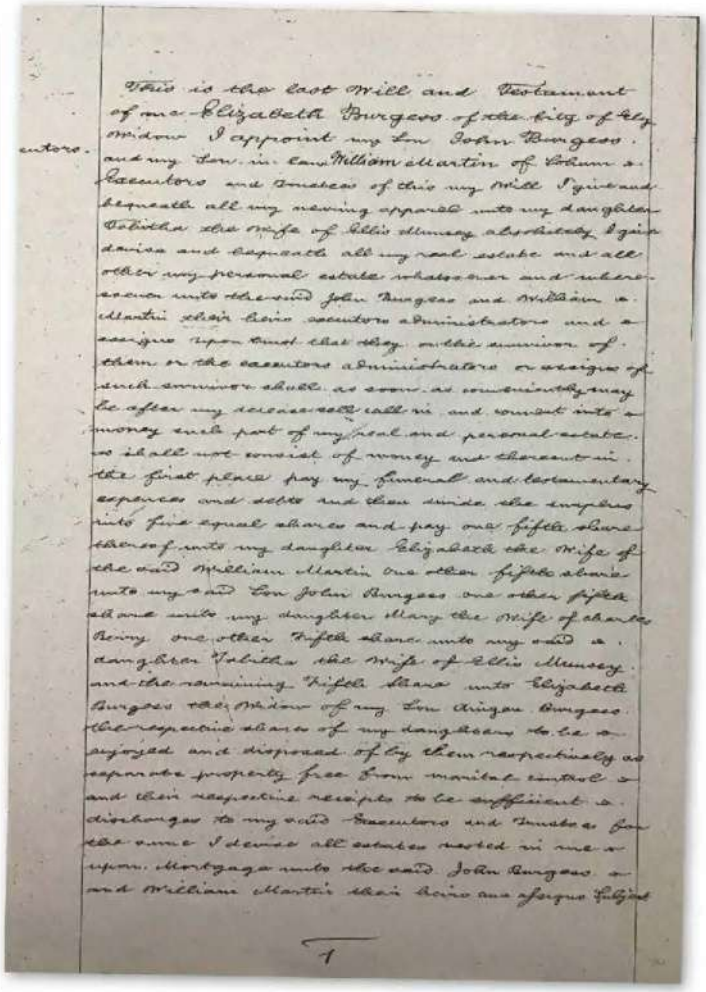
Editor Replies **We can all be truly grateful that infant mortality has decreased so dramatically.**

Women's Wills

Further to Sue Turner's letter about women's wills in the February issue, my 3x great grandmother, Elizabeth Burgess, died in 1878 in Ely, aged 84. She had been left in comfortable circumstances by her husband James, who died in 1859.

She left money to all her surviving children, including her widowed daughter-in-law, with the stipulation that, "The respective shares of my daughters to be enjoyed and disposed of by them respectively as separate property free from marital control."

I was surprised and heartened by her forward-thinking attitude.
Susan Hayward, Devizes, Wiltshire



Susan's forebear Elizabeth Burgess' will stipulated that the money left to her daughters should be treated "as separate property free from marital control"

Editor Replies **The 1870 Married Women's Property Act allowed our female relations to inherit and control the money they inherited, as long as the sum involved was less than £200. I suspect that Elizabeth was delighted by this new development, and quite rightly wanted to make the most of it.**

@geneapleau replied to our question about nicknames for grandparents on Bluesky
Both my grandfathers were called Grampy, paternal grandmother was called Grammy, and my maternal grandmother we called Happy! (And she was!) #genealogy

Civil-War Confusion

Chloe O'Shea's article in the February issue about making timelines intrigued me, so I had a go with my Thurlow line which I have fairly reliably traced back to 1492, all in Suffolk (we don't go far!). I began by looking at who was monarch when each one lived. This led me to wonder if my ancestors between 1649 and 1660 were Cavalier or Roundhead – that is, Royalist or Parliamentarian. Is there any way to find this out?
Rev Mary Sokanovic, by email

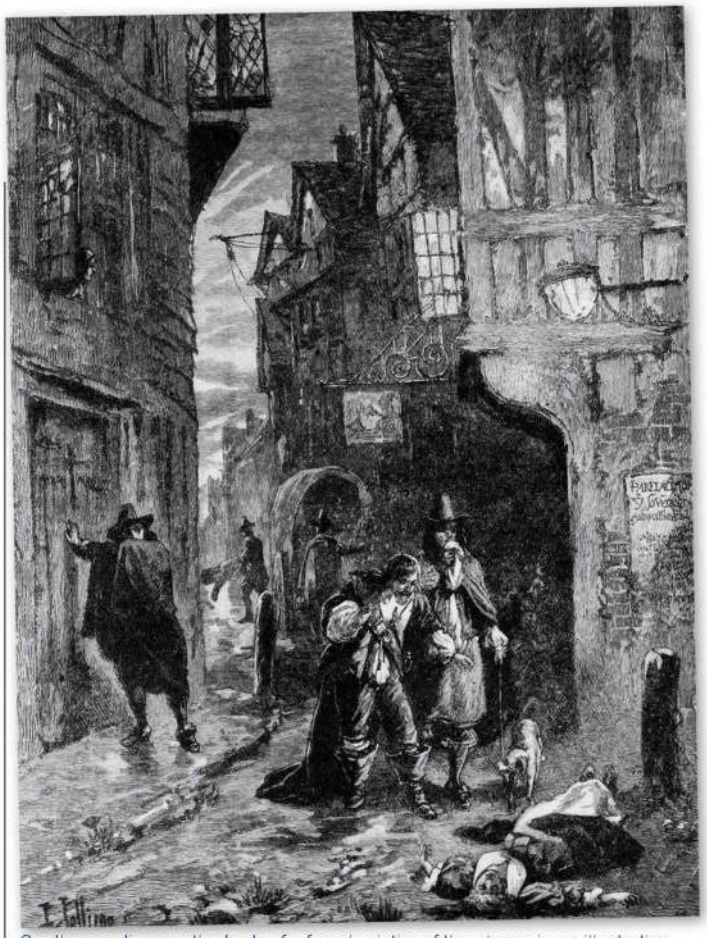
Editor Replies **This is a very interesting question, and there isn't an easy answer. Most ordinary people just tried to carry on living through the chaos of war without recording any allegiances. Hopefully next month's 'Best Websites' on the English Civil War will give you some useful pointers.**

Researching London's Burial Grounds

Trying to locate the burial place of ancestors is one of the main problems for family historians and one we are often asked, so it was good to read Jonathan Scott's 'Best Websites' piece in February's issue. Final resting places are particularly problematic here in London because of the vast number of people who have lived here, and the fact that Inner London burial grounds were closed following the 1850 Burial Acts.

Here at London Westminster & Middlesex Family History Society we have a new resource to help with this, which is a series of short, illustrated talks on YouTube. These each focus on an ancient parish (often now covering a large area of London) and show all the burial grounds that have been in this area, the dates they were operating, what happened to them and where any records are that relate to people buried there. We will be adding more of these throughout the year. Of course, it might not actually be possible to find an ancestor's grave in London, but we hope to give people the best shot at doing so. You can find our videos here: **youtube.com/@LWMFHS/videos**.
Elizabeth Burling, chairman, LWMFHS

Editor Replies Thanks for sharing this Elizabeth, it looks like a great resource.



Gentlemen discover the body of a female victim of the plague in an illustration from Evelyn Lord's feature on the Great Plague of London in our January issue

Plague Praise

Although I have been researching plague and the Black Death, on and off, for over 60 years, there's always something new to learn, so I was keen to read Evelyn Lord's article in your January issue and was not disappointed. I had not come across William Boghurst and his 20 stages indicating bubonic plague, although Covid-19 has taught us that the same pathogen can affect people differently. Bubonic, pneumonic and septicaemic versions of the plague get their names from the predominant symptoms, but it's not certain they were different sorts of plague. It is probable, however, that as with Covid-19, there were different strains of *Yersinia pestis*, some more infectious, others more deadly.

It is unfortunate that Evelyn repeats the old myth that plague was spread by the fleas of black rats. This theory was first challenged over 50 years ago and has subsequently been shown by several scholars, historians, biologists and mathematicians to be an inadequate explanation of the extent and speed with which the plague spread. The first infection may well have come from rats, but the spread was mainly from human to human. People were infected and became infectious several days before they felt ill and showed any plague symptoms. During that period, they inadvertently infected others, through coughing, sneezing or touch, again just like Covid-19 (hence masks and handwashing).

Strictly speaking, the plague in England didn't end in 1667. There was an outbreak in the 1690s but it didn't spread, nor did the serious plague epidemic in Marseilles in 1722. Why they didn't spread is not clear, and Evelyn was wise to be cautious. Herd immunity may have been one cause, although this theory assumes that those who survived the infection would not catch it again – something that proved false for Covid-19. Also there is no evidence that immunity from plague can be inherited.
Derek Turner, by email

Editor Replies I'm glad you enjoyed our article on the plague. Having now lived through a pandemic, it makes it even more relatable. I should add that Evelyn did not mean to imply that the plague was exclusively spread by fleas.

@Wozzo22 responded to our comment that "Irish family history research can be tricky" as we shared our expert online guide at tinyurl.com/wdytya-irish
Not quite as tricky as it used to be pre-internet, though!

YOUR LETTER IN PRINT We reserve the right to edit any letters sent to the magazine. Messages posted to our Facebook wall and tweets sent to us may also appear in print. The choice of Star Letter is the editor's and the prize is subject to change.

ourmedia

Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine is published by Our Media Limited

Issue 229 – April 2025

Editorial
Editor Sarah Williams
Production editor Seth Burgess
Features editor Rosemary Collins
Art editor Robbie Bennie

Advertising Sales
Advertising manager Andy Williams
0117 476 7313
Inserts Laurence Robertson
00 353 876 902208

Marketing
Head of loyalty, CRM and retention Rosa Sherwood
Subscriptions marketing coordinator Dennis Awdziejczyk

Press And PR
Head of PR Dominic Lobley

Content Operations
Director Sarah Powell
Content operations specialist Holly Donmall
Ad design Camilla Owen
Senior ad coordinator Charles Thurlow

Subscriptions And Back Issues
t 03330 162120*
w **ourmediashop.com/contact-us**
or write to *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, UK
Basic annual subscription rates:
UK £74.75, Eire & Europe €70, ROW $75

Syndication & Licensing
Director of licensing & syndication Tim Hudson
Magazine syndication executive Emma Brunt

Our Media Ltd
Brand lead Rob Brock
Chief executive officer Andy Marshall

Wall To Wall Media Ltd
Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine is produced under licence from Wall to Wall Media Ltd. Wall to Wall Media Ltd is part of Shed Media, PLC and is one of the world's leading producers of factual and drama programming. Wall to Wall is the producer of the multi-award winning television series *Who Do You Think You Are?* The series is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and has signed up to 10:10 (**www.1010global.org**). This has involved hiring more local crews and taking fewer flights while continuing to make a series that goes to wherever the story leads. Visit **www.walltowall.co.uk** for more information.

© Our Media Ltd 2025

ISSN: 1755-7690
Printed by William Gibbons Ltd.

We abide by IPSO's rules and regulations. To give feedback about our magazines, please visit **ourmedia.co.uk**, email *editorialcomplaints@ourmedia.co.uk*, or write to Legal, Our Media Ltd, Eagle House, Bristol, BS1 4ST.

Our Media Company is working to ensure that all of its paper comes from well-managed, Forest Stewardship Council-certified forests and other controlled sources. This magazine is printed on FSC-certified paper. It can be recycled for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of them at your local collection point.

*UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed-line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm. Overseas subscribers call +44 1604 973728.

What's On

Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk* to feature your event here for free

PICK OF THE MONTH

Don't miss this event in south-west England

South West FHF Really Useful Family History Show

29 March
a Kinson Community Centre, Bournemouth
t 01202 785623
w **dorsetfhs.org.uk/events-activities/family-history-day/**

The Family History Federation will host its latest show in partnership with Dorset Family History Society and Devon Family History Society. There will be two talks – 'Making the Most of Your Autosomal DNA Matches' by Debbie Kennett *(pictured)* and 'The A-Z of Family History' by Janet Few – plus the chance to book one-to-one consultations with the following experts: Sally Macdougall (dating photos), Laurie Page (reading old handwriting), Debbie Kennett (DNA) and members of both family history societies (general research advice). There will also be an exhibition hall and a raffle. Free entry, £2 for talks.

IN PERSON

Strength And Resilience

Until 8 June
a Somerset Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury
t 01458 831197
w **tinyurl.com/swh-resilience**

Learn about four women with a link to Somerset who played very different roles in the Second World War – photographer Lee Miller, spy Odette Hallowes, Betty Carter of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and peace campaigner Kathleen Tacchi-Morris. Free with entry to the museum (£10, £8 for concessions).

The Real Basil Brown

2 April
a The Salvation Army Citadel, Ipswich
t 01473 274300
w **suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/group/ipswich-group**

This talk from Suffolk Family History Society discusses the amateur archaeologist who first discovered the treasure at Sutton Hoo. Small charge.

East Surrey Family History Society Study Day

5 April
a The National Archives, Kew
w **eastsurreyfhs.org.uk/index.php/event**

This Study Day with the theme 'Letters from Life' features talks on letters from India by Dr Sophie Kay, personal correspondence from 1500–1700 by Ruth Selman and Poor Law correspondence by Paul Carter. £8 (£6 for members).

MI5: Official Secrets

5 April to 28 September
a The National Archives, Kew
t 020 8876 3444
w **nationalarchives.gov.uk/mi5-official-secrets/**

This groundbreaking exhibition uses case files to tell the story of the security service. Free.

Sir William Pearce – Victorian Shipbuilder And Lothario

5 April
a Dartford Science and Technology College
t 01322 527604
w **tinyurl.com/nwkfhs-loth**

Rebecca Clarke will reveal how she uncovered her relation Sir William Pearce's complicated life over 100 years later. Free to North West Kent Family History Society members, non-members asked for a small donation.

Made In Manchester

9 April
a Sale Moor Community Centre
w **fhsc.org.uk/events/sale-group.html**

Brian Groom will discuss his book *Made in Manchester: A People's History of the City that Shaped the Modern World*. £2 for members of the Family History Society of Cheshire, otherwise £2.50.

Show And Tell – Early Policing

9 April
a Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick
t 01926 738959
w **heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/events**

Learn the origins of Warwickshire Constabulary in the mid-19th century through the records of the quarter sessions. Free.

Heroes And Ghosts

15 April
a Nursteed Centre, Devizes
t 01380 723191
w **wiltshirefhs.co.uk/devizes-branch**

Mike Hallett explores how past scandal can affect genealogical research in this Wiltshire Family History Society event. Free.

IN PERSON & ONLINE

People In Bedfordshire Landscape

4 April
a St Mary's Church Hall, Bedford
e *secretary@bfhs.org.uk*
w **bfhs.org.uk/talks.html**

Brian Kerr presents a talk on the history of the Bedfordshire countryside. Free to Bedfordshire Family History Society members, small charge for non-members.

ONLINE

Society Of Genealogists

Various dates
w **members.sog.org.uk/events**

Upcoming online talks from the society include 'AI and the Family Historian' by Andrew Redfern (29 March) and 'Beyond the Disco Lights: Culture and Innovation in Newcastle-upon-Tyne' by Gudrun Lauret (3 April). Various prices.

Navigating The Maps Website

26 March
w **nls.uk/whats-on/navigating-the-maps-website/**

Learn how to make the most of the historic maps of Britain available on the National Library of Scotland's website **maps.nls.uk** with this workshop. Free.

Wills Workshop

8 and 15 April
w **tinyurl.com/berks-wills**

This two-part workshop from Berkshire Family History Society explains how to use wills and probate records in England and Wales for your research. £20 (£18 for members).

BOOK AHEAD

Family historians in Merseyside have reason to celebrate

The Family History Show

3 May
a Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool
w **thefamilyhistoryshow.com/liverpool/**

The Family History Show heads to Aintree at the start of May, and includes expert talks, one-to-one consultations, an exhibition hall and more. £8 in advance (two tickets for £14), £12 on the day.

News

Rosemary Collins reports on the latest data releases and genealogy news

The National Archives plans to use AI to transcribe records

The National Archives at Kew (TNA; nationalarchives.gov.uk) has been trialling the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for the past 12 months and plans to use it to transcribe and translate records, *WDYTYA? Magazine* has learnt.

On 4 February, in response to a written question from Sir John Hayes MP, the minister for culture, media and sport Chris Bryant revealed, "TNA has used artificial intelligence for over the past 12 months and its officials have, with robust safeguards, piloted the use of AI in several areas."

Bryant outlined the areas as follows, saying that TNA is seeking to "Speed up office-based tasks. For example, piloting the transcription of some internal meetings and summarising texts.

"Improve public services. For example, investigating creating short summaries of record descriptions for the online catalogue and identifying amendments and enabling powers in legislation on **legislation.gov.uk**.

"Support the Government to better manage its information. For example, investigating AI tools to aid officials in the appraisal, selection and sensitivity review of digital records before their transfer for preservation at TNA.

"Aid research into historical records. For example, transcribing handwritten and printed text in historical records."

A spokesperson for TNA told *WDYTYA? Magazine*, "Archives are information organisations. As such, we have some significant opportunities to use AI. To give just a handful of examples: we can now automatically produce transcriptions, translations, and summaries of digitised records; we can automatically link people, places and events across catalogue descriptions; or describe the content of photographs. These are all areas where AI can really help us to help users of the archive.

The National Archives at Kew, which has been piloting the use of AI for a year

"At TNA we have been researching what AI can do today, and how we might use AI to improve our services to the public. We've also been exploring what might be round the corner.

"We know that researching archives can be difficult. It takes time to learn how to use a catalogue, and then to explore what the archive has. The amount of information a human researcher can process is relatively small, compared with a computer. Very few people can afford to spend months researching the archive. AI potentially transforms the researcher's information-gathering ability. We can imagine an AI research assistant, keeping track of everything you've seen, and actively supporting you as you go about your research.

"As archivists, we have a responsibility to be good custodians. Alongside the exciting opportunities with AI, we also need to think carefully about its adoption and use. There are risks and issues that we need to consider, particularly around cyber security, data protection and the environmental impact of different AI tools."

We can imagine an AI research assistant actively supporting you

"We're committed to making the most of the entirely new types of intelligence we are all gaining through AI and to doing so responsibly," they concluded.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NEWS IN BRIEF

A list of air-raid casualties from 1944

Ancestry adds Kensington and Chelsea records from the Second World War

Family history website Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has released a collection of 7,384 Second World War civilian records from Kensington and Chelsea in London. The records, added as part of Ancestry's partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, provide an insight into life on the home front during the war. They include employee cards, applications for military medals, *London Gazette* articles, death and burial registers, refugee lists, and lists of air-raid wardens and messengers.

The new site for Ireland's census records

Ireland's census records get new online home

The National Archives of Ireland has moved the country's historic census records to its own website. The records, including the complete 1901 and 1911 records and the surviving records from 1821–1891, are now available at **nationalarchives.ie/collections/search-the-census**. They have previously been hosted on the separate website **census.nationalarchives.ie**, which will shut down later this year. The new web page will also host the 1926 census of Ireland, which is the next available census after 1911 and is due to be released in April 2026.

TheGenealogist adds five million directory records

Family history site TheGenealogist (thegenealogist.co.uk) has added a new set of 22 directories, containing records of more than five million people in 19th and 20th-century England and Scotland.

The directories have been digitised, and can be searched by name and occupation.

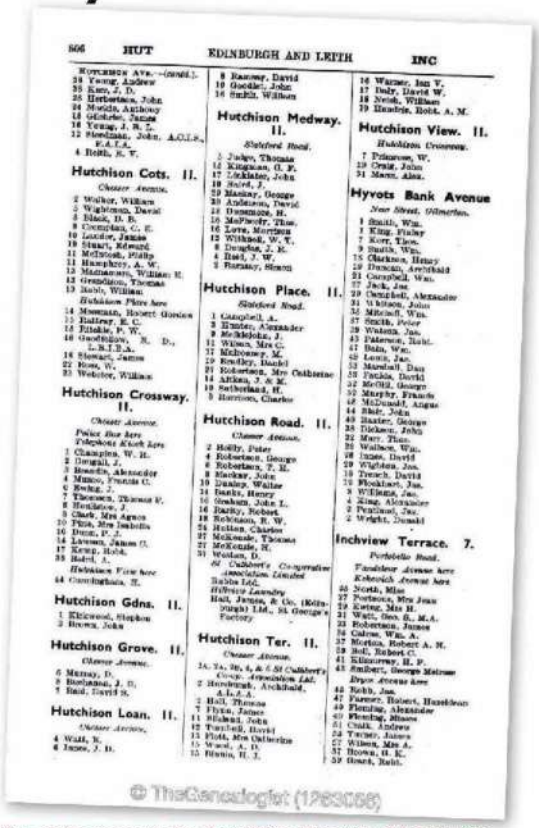
Directories are a useful resource for finding where your family lived, particularly in years for which census records do not exist.

The earliest directory that has been added is a Post Office directory for London dating from 1854. There is also a directory of Prestwich in Manchester dating from 1899.

All of the other directories date from the 20th century, up to 1955, including a number of rare directories from the Second World War covering Edinburgh, Birmingham, Chester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Liverpool and London.

Other cities included in the collection are Aberdeen, Ipswich, Newcastle upon Tyne and Southampton. The counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire are also featured.

"With no 1941 census taken due to the war and the 1951 census under wraps for another 25 years, these directories serve as an invaluable substitute – acting like a head-of-household census for residential and business listings," said Mark Bayley, head of online development at TheGenealogist. "Offering a fascinating glimpse into life in wartime and postwar Britain, they provide information on individuals and businesses during a period of significant social change, making them an essential resource for family historians."



One of the pages in the *Post Office Directory of Edinburgh and Leith, 1940–1941*, which is now on TheGenealogist

Lord Ronald Gower

CAN YOU HELP?

Members of the public are invited to help transcribe the diaries of Lord Ronald Gower (1845–1916), a politician, sculptor and writer. Gower was the youngest son of the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, served as a Liberal MP for Sutherland, and sculpted the statue of William Shakespeare seen on his monument in Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1889 he was implicated in the Cleveland Street Scandal, when a number of prominent men were accused of being clients of a homosexual brothel in Central London. The 48 volumes of his diaries are held at Staffordshire Archives. The project, 'Ronnie's Ghost', aims to transcribe entries from 1867 online "to assess whether Ronnie will attract sufficient interest… to rescue him from archival darkness". To take part, go to **fromthepage.com/lord/ronald**.

GETTY IMAGES

Jane Luetkens and Lucas Haasis, the project's research coordinator

British woman discovers link to 18th-century German merchant

A London teacher has been reunited with letters belonging to her wealthy 18th-century German ancestor thanks to a project at The National Archives at Kew (TNA).

The 'Prize Papers' project (**tinyurl.com/tna-prize-papers**) is digitising thousands of documents taken from more than 35,000 foreign ships captured by the British between 1652 and 1815.

Among them are 2,480 letters and papers belonging to Nicolaus Gottlieb Luetkens (1716–1788), one of the wealthiest merchants in Hamburg – his portrait still hangs in Hamburg City Hall.

Jane Luetkens (63) found out about the project online and contacted TNA. Her father and grandparents came to Britain as refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. They brought with them the only surviving possessions of their famous forebear – a tea chest, silver spoons and a seal stamp. The stamp perfectly matches the seal on the letters, proving the connection.

MyHeritage releases new DNA tool

MyHeritage's Ancient Origins tool provides a new way of exploring DNA test results

Online genealogy platform MyHeritage (**myheritage.com**) has launched Ancient Origins, a DNA analysis tool said to trace users' heritage back 10,000 years. Ancient Origins, developed with the firm Illustrative DNA, compares users' test results to DNA samples extracted from archaeological sites. It reveals links to more than 150 ancient populations, including the Romans, Vikings, Phoenicians and Egyptians, and produces AI avatars that share the history of their civilisation in animated videos. The tool is available to anyone with a MyHeritage 'Complete' or 'Omni' subscription who has taken a MyHeritage DNA test or uploaded test results from another company.

28,880
The number of Irish police records (1845–1885) that have been added to **ancestry.co.uk**

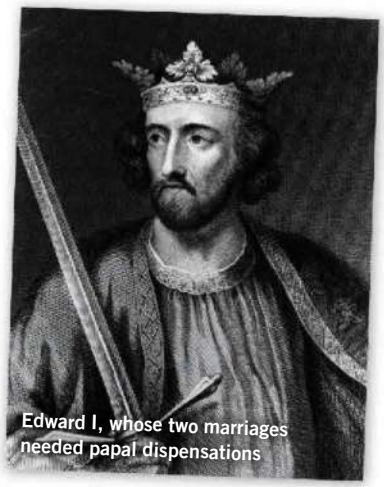
EHRI-UK
A new UK hub of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure is opening (**tinyurl.com/bbc-ehri**)

8,000
The number of early photos of England from the Janette Rosing Collection that Historic England has acquired (**tinyurl.com/guard-rosing**)

Edward Elgar
Drafts by the composer have been donated to the British Library by the descendants of one of his students (**tinyurl.com/guard-elgar**)

3,158
The number of Middlesex baptism records (1538–1975) that have been added to **findmypast.co.uk**

7 per cent
The proportion of English Heritage's workforce that could be cut (**tinyurl.com/mus-eh-cut**)



Edward I, whose two marriages needed papal dispensations

Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies creates free papal-dispensations database

The Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow (www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/genealogy) has built a free online database containing papal dispensations for marriage.

Dispensations for marriage were required by the Catholic Church if the bride and groom were related in close degrees of consanguinity – meaning a familial relationship – by affinity, or a spiritual relationship.

Since 1893, 22 volumes of calendars of entries in the papal registers relating to Britain and Ireland, including dispensations for marriage, have been published, spanning 1198–1534. Recent volumes in this series have been published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission (**irishmanuscripts.ie**). The 14 earliest volumes have been rekeyed to British History Online (**british-history.ac.uk**), and five further volumes are on the website HathiTrust (**hathitrust.org**). However, family historians can easily search 1,083 records via the new database (**papaldispensations.org.uk**).

The records include the marriages of members of the medieval royal family and aristocracy such as Edward I, who had dispensations for both his first marriage to Eleanor of Castile and his second to Margaret of France.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES / GETTY IMAGES

The Essence Of Easter

Alan Crosby explains the role of Easter in our ancestors' lives two centuries ago

The Easter period was very important in every community in the past. Famously, Easter itself was a 'movable feast', which could take place (as it still can) anywhere between 22 March and 25 April. The calculations of the date are based on the moon: in AD 325 the Council of Nicaea decided that it would fall on the Sunday following the first full moon after 21 March. Even back then there were tables to calculate the date of Easter in future years. To know the date in advance was important, because the ritual calendar of the year depended on this key date.

Easter, of course, was focused on the crucifixion of Christ, his death and burial, and his resurrection. At the same time there was Lady Day, which always fell on 25 March. This marked the Feast of the Annunciation, commemorating when the angel told Mary that she would bear the Christ Child. Lady Day was important both for the Church and for secular matters. It was the formal beginning of the church year, and by custom one of the two rent days in England and Wales (the other being Michaelmas, 29 September). Easter was also one of the few occasions when workers might expect a day's holiday. Before the mid-19th century worshippers in church normally received communion four times a year, Easter being one of those solemn occasions.

The Easter period was when local democracy could be demonstrated

Because it was the start of the year for the Church, Eastertide (not just 25 March) was when accounts were made up, churchwardens appointed, and a parish meeting was held. The ratepayers could consider administrative and financial problems, and perhaps make complaints about the actions and behaviour of parish officers, while the latter could point out problems in need of rectification and propose the raising of the necessary funds by levying a parish rate. So the Easter period was when local democracy, of sorts, could be demonstrated.

In his diary for 11 April 1803 (Easter Monday) Rev William Holland, vicar of Over Stowey in Somerset, noted that "After [midday] dinner the Parishioners met. I represented the Altar in the Chancel and the Cloth that covered the Communion Table as shabby and rotten and proposed repairs and a new one." A farmer spoke up and promised that he would do this work at once, but another parishioner, James Rich, objected on the grounds of cost.

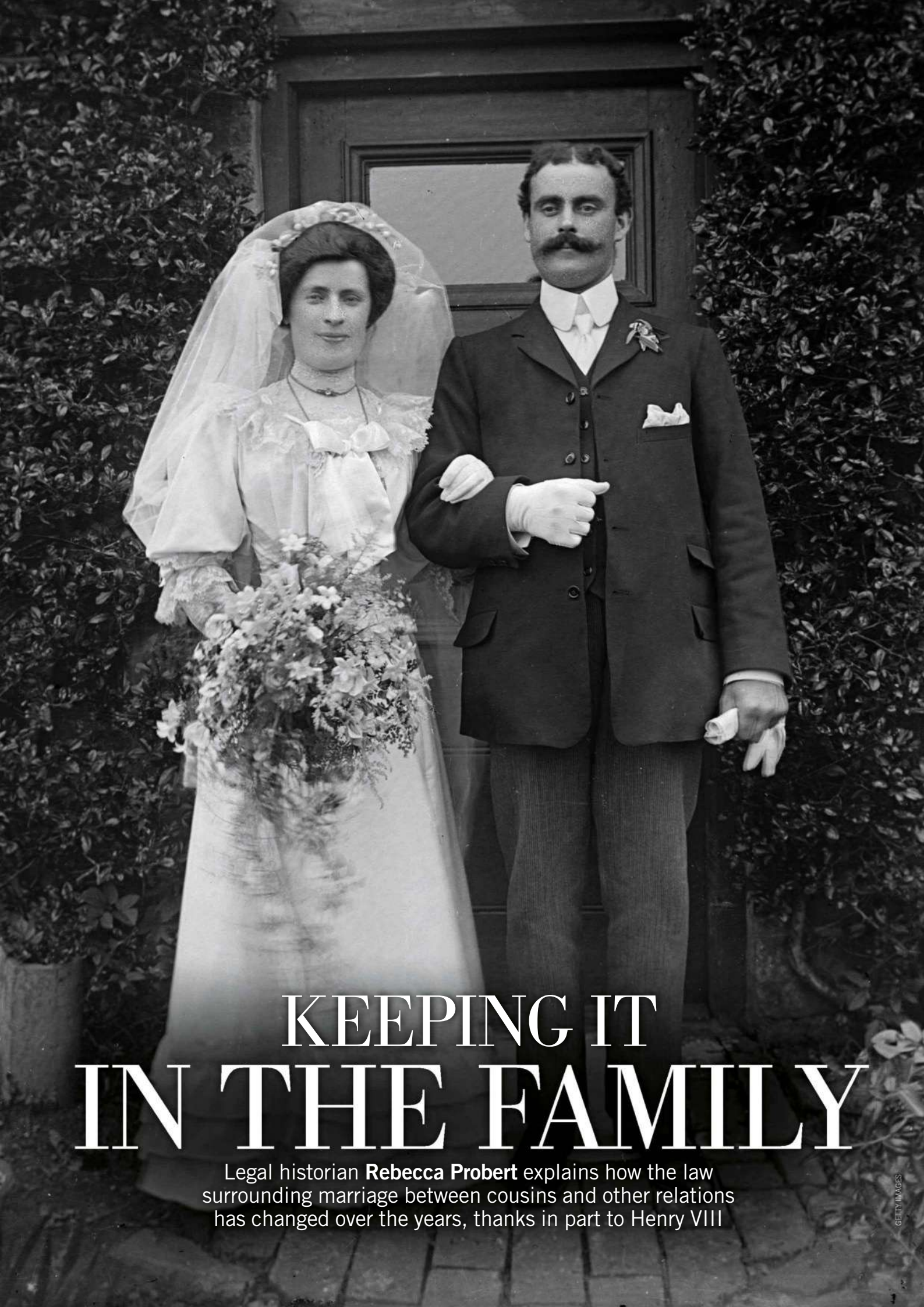
Rev Holland refused to accept this, and "gave him some strong replies", confiding in his diary that Rich had been drinking. The vicar then had his revenge, fixing the election for new churchwardens so that Rich was not chosen. Unlike Christmas, Easter was not a season for goodwill to all men!

But it might be an occasion for gift-giving and treating the servants. Another cleric whose diaries have made him a celebrity is Parson James Woodforde, of Weston Longville in Norfolk. He recorded on Friday 2 April 1790 that it was Good Friday, and he gave gifts of clothing to the parish clerk ("a good black striped Coat and Waistcote") and John Smith, his manservant ("a pair of old Velveret [velveteen] Breeches and a powdered Wig").

The previous five days had been marked by fasting, but the fast was broken on Good Friday. Nonetheless, Woodforde's household (like many thousands of others) did not eat meat. Instead, the Easter meal included smelts (small fish), boiled eggs, fritters (made with expensive sugar) and toasted cheese. And there was another form of abstention: "I do not play at Quadrille this Evening being Good-Friday." Quadrille was a card game – there was no gambling on Good Friday for the clergy!

ALAN CROSBY lives in Lancashire and is the editor of *The Local Historian*

ILLUSTRATION WWW.SUEGENT.COM



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Legal historian **Rebecca Probert** explains how the law surrounding marriage between cousins and other relations has changed over the years, thanks in part to Henry VIII

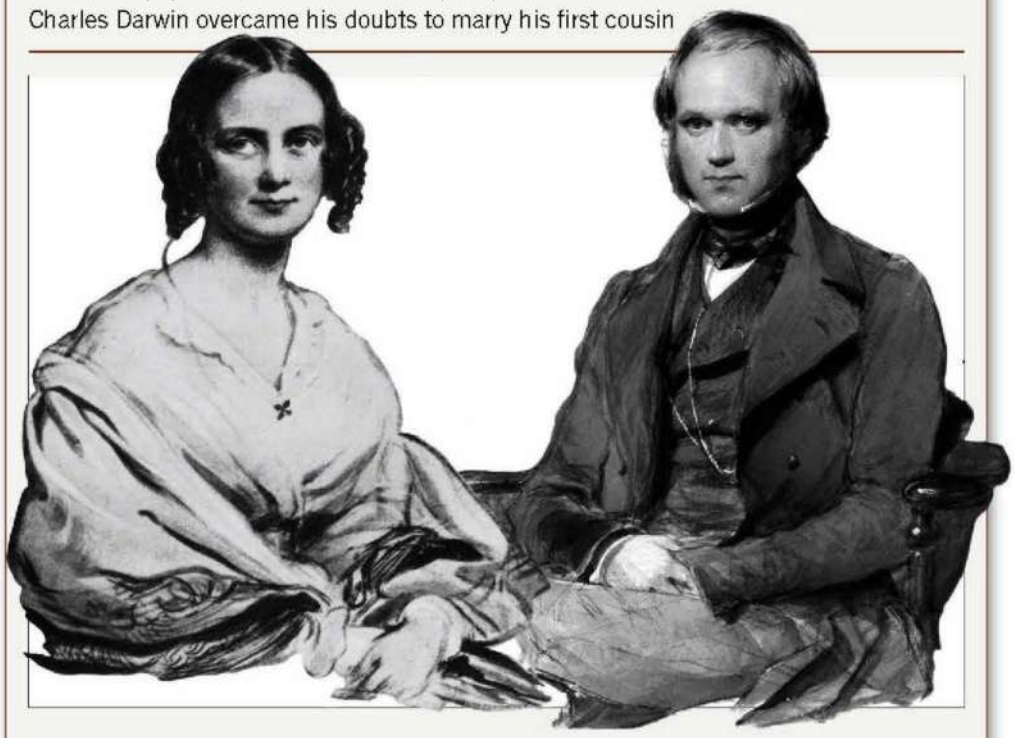
GETTY IMAGES

Many family historians will have found cousin marriages in their tree. Few, however, will have traced their ancestors back to the point where they will need to think about the legality of such marriages, since marriages between cousins have been valid in England and Wales since the early 16th century. But just as cousin marriages came to be allowed, other marriages were prohibited. The story behind these changes explains why the 'prohibited degrees' of marriage have been so complex and contested ever since.

Before the Reformation, entry into marriage was governed by the canon law of the Catholic Church. Marriages between blood relations were prohibited, including those between first cousins. Prior to 1215, the prohibitions were even more extensive, but very few of us will have traced our families back that far. Marrying a blood relative of a former spouse was also prohibited, on the basis that marriage made husband and wife one flesh. As a result, widows and widowers were prohibited from marrying with any close relative of their late spouse, up to and including a first cousin, or with the spouse of a deceased relative, just as they were prohibited from marrying their own kin. This was referred to as the impediment of 'affinity'. Most surprisingly of all to modern eyes, affinity was also created by sex outside marriage, with the consequence that individuals were barred from marrying any close relative – again, including first cousins – of anyone they had had sex with.

Darwin's Dilemma

Charles Darwin overcame his doubts to marry his first cousin



In 1838, the naturalist Charles Darwin *(above right)* was pondering the pros and cons of getting married, famously concluding that the companionship of a wife was at least "better than a dog". The following year he married Emma Wedgwood *(above left)*, the daughter of his mother's brother. Cousin marriage was common within the Wedgwood family – Emma's parents were also first cousins, and three of her siblings married cousins.

Over the years, Darwin's botanical experiments led him to conclude that "the crossing of animals and plants which are not closely related to each other is highly beneficial or even necessary", whereas interbreeding if "prolonged during many generations is highly injurious". The poor health and early deaths of some of his 10 children also led him to wonder whether marriages between cousins were problematic. But Parliament rejected his suggestion that the 1871 census should include a question about cousin marriage, feeling it was overly intrusive.

Darwin's son George then took up the challenge of trying to ascertain the extent – and the effects – of cousin marriage. Analysing family pedigrees, marriage announcements, questionnaires and other data, he estimated that cousin marriages accounted for just 3 per cent of marriages in England and Wales. And further analysis of whether there was any link between cousin marriage and 'idiocy', infertility or high death rates led him to believe that the risks had been exaggerated.

Biblical Origins

These prohibitions were loosely based on the biblical Book of Leviticus. This had set out a general ban on men having sex with any woman to whom they were closely related. It also listed various specific relationships that were banned, including specified blood relatives (mother, sister, granddaughter, aunt), in-laws (the wife of one's father, son, brother or uncle), and the daughter or granddaughter of a former sexual partner. In addition men were told not to take their wife's sister as a rival wife during their wife's lifetime (which rather implied that a man could marry his wife's sister after his wife had died).

So, the Church's prohibitions were more far-reaching than Leviticus mandated. But they could also be dispensed with – for a fee. Such fees were a key target of Protestant reformers in the early 16th century. And in England and Wales such criticisms combined with the tangled matrimonial career of Henry VIII to bring about reform.

Henry VIII had obtained a dispensation from the Pope to marry his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, who was the widow of his older brother Arthur. By 1525, however, Henry had become infatuated with Anne Boleyn, and in 1527 he began to take steps to free himself from Catherine. In May 1533, their marriage was declared void, with the 1534 Succession Act explaining that this was because Catherine had ▶

been "lawful wife" to Arthur and "carnally known" by him.

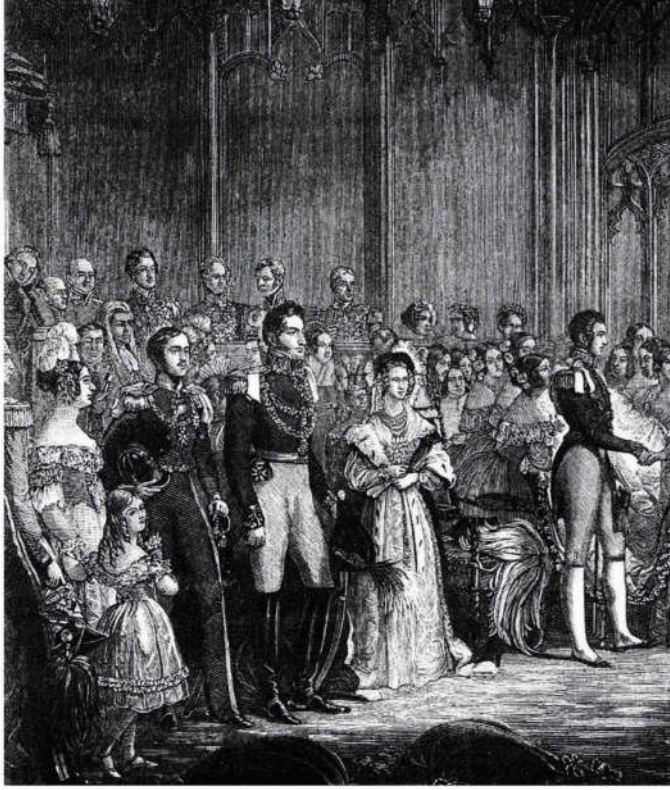
More fundamentally, the Act declared all existing marriages within the prohibited degrees to be void, even if a dispensation had been granted. At the same time, it limited the prohibited degrees to a narrower range of close relatives (now excluding cousins), and to in-laws whose marriages had been consummated. The possibility of affinity being created by sex alone was removed, to ensure the validity of Henry's marriage to Anne even though he had slept with her sister Mary.

By 1540 Henry was on wife number five, Catherine Howard – who happened to be the cousin of Anne Boleyn. For the avoidance of any doubt, a further Act passed that year emphasised that cousin marriages were lawful.

Regrettably, the Act didn't set out a full list of who could marry whom. Instead, it simply stated – in words that need to be quoted in full to give you an idea of the confusion they were to cause – that "no Prohibition, God's Law except, shall trouble or impeach any Marriage without the Levitical Degrees".

In other words, marriages that were prohibited in Leviticus, or, by implication, within the equivalent degree of relationship, were prohibited, but others were not – except when "God's law" said that they were. Inevitably, individuals tried to argue that they should be permitted to marry anyone who was not specifically prohibited in Leviticus.

A generation later, in 1563, the Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker sought to bring some much-needed clarity to the law by publishing a table setting out all of the people that any individual was prohibited from marrying. This was a longer list than had appeared in either of the Acts passed in Henry's reign, because it helpfully spelled out all the relationships that were regarded as being within the same degree as those mentioned in Leviticus. So if marriage between nephew and aunt was banned, so too was a marriage between uncle and niece. Parker's list barred marriage with a grandparent, parent, child, grandchild, sibling, aunt or uncle, and nephew or niece, together with the former spouse of any of these relations or with one's former spouse's relations – including the controversial category of marriage to a deceased wife's sister. The table was widely publicised, with all churches being required to display a copy.



Voidable Rather Than Void

In practice, the impact of these prohibitions was modified by the fact that any marriages that did take place were held to be voidable rather than simply void. This meant that a decree from a church court was necessary to annul such a marriage, and the common-law courts stopped the church courts from annulling marriages between in-laws after one of the parties had died.

Incidentally, none of these cases involved marriages between blood relations, but commentators

The Scottish Question

The legal system in Scotland had harsh punishment for what it considered incest

Scottish law also permitted first cousins to marry

The history of the prohibited degrees in Scotland followed a different path. Like England and Wales, its marriage laws originated in the canon law of the Catholic Church. And, again like England and Wales, it made some fundamental changes at the Reformation, with legislation being passed in 1567 that permitted cousins to marry. But on the very same day, legislation was also passed making incest a criminal offence punishable by death. Like Henry VIII's 1540 Act, the 1567 Act referred to Leviticus as the touchstone of what relationships were banned. But unlike in England and Wales, the Scottish courts interpreted this in line with pre-Reformation practice as prohibiting sex with the relative of a former sexual partner. Such relationships were accordingly punishable as incest, and over the years both men and women were executed for the offence. Only in 1827 was it decided that sex alone did not create 'affinity', and only in 1887 was the death penalty for incest formally abolished. After that, however, developments in Scotland converged with those in England and Wales, with 20th-century reforms allowing marriages to former in-laws.

GETTY IMAGES / WELLCOME COLLECTION

Queen Victoria married her first cousin Albert in 1840. Cousin marriages were relatively common among the royal families of Europe

nonetheless lumped both types of marriages together in describing them as voidable.

For most family historians, however, the 1835 Marriage Act is perhaps the most relevant piece of legislation when it comes to marriages within the prohibited degrees. From 31 August 1835, every subsequent marriage within the prohibited degrees was simply void. Ongoing marriages between blood relatives remained voidable, and could still be annulled, while ongoing marriages between in-laws were declared to be valid.

This firming up of the rules reignited the arguments over which relationships were within the prohibited degrees. The law was tested when James Chadwick was prosecuted for bigamy in 1846. After his first wife had died, James had married her sister. Upon being told that this marriage was void, he had then married a third woman, only to find himself on trial for bigamy. His case was referred to the Court of Queen's Bench, which confirmed that a marriage to a deceased wife's sister fell within the prohibited degrees. This meant that James was innocent of any crime – since his second marriage had been void, his third was not bigamous. But it also meant that many other individuals were in marriages that had no legal status.

Over the course of the 19th century, numerous attempts were made to lift the prohibition on marriage to a deceased wife's sister. The 1907 Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act finally removed the bar on such marriages, as well as validating any existing ones (as long as neither party had married someone else). Similar legislation was passed 14 years later in relation to marriages to a deceased husband's brother, responding to the plight of war widows in love with their former brother-in-law. Further legislation in 1931 removed the bar on marrying a deceased's spouse's aunt/uncle or their niece/nephew.

Marrying An Ex's Relation

As divorce became more common, legislation in 1960 removed the bar on marrying a divorced spouse's sibling, aunt/uncle or niece/nephew. The final set of prohibitions – restricting marriages between a parent and the former spouse of his or her child, and between former step-parent and stepchild – was revised in the 1980s. Marriage to a stepchild was permitted if both were at least 21 and the step-parent had not been a de-facto parent to the child. Marriage to the parent of a former spouse was also permitted, if both were at least 21 and their former spouses were dead (a harsh condition that was removed as the result of legal challenge in 2007). The only prohibition to have been added to the list since 1835 is that between adoptive parent and child, after adoption was put on a legal footing in 1926.

Throughout all these changes, cousin marriage had been a constant reference point in the debates. Every time a proposal was brought forward to liberalise the law, someone would try to bolster the case for reform by questioning why that particular marriage was banned when it was legal to marry a cousin. There were also occasional voices questioning the desirability of marriages between cousins (see the box). But no one ever suggested that cousin marriages should be banned.

Recent months, however, have seen the availability of cousin marriage being questioned, with a new focus on the alleged health risks. In December 2024, an MP even introduced a Bill into Parliament to ban marriage between first cousins, sparking a flurry of media interest and debate. Whatever happens to this Bill, cousin marriage is back on the political agenda for the first time in almost 500 years.

REBECCA PROBERT is professor of law at the University of Exeter, and author of *Tying the Knot: The Formation of Marriage 1836–2020* (CUP, 2021)

Resources

Take your research further

ARTICLES

Interpreting Choices: What Can We Infer From Where Our Ancestors Married?
Rebecca Probert
Journal of Genealogy and Family History Vol. 5 No. 1, 2021
Rebecca's article collates case studies of individuals who married within the prohibited degrees, and how they achieved this. It can be read for free at **tinyurl.com/qualified-genealogists-prob**.

Marriages Between First Cousins in England and Their Effects
George H Darwin
Journal of the Statistical Society of London Vol. 38 No. 2, 1875
Written by Charles Darwin's son, this offers an insight into Victorian concerns about the practice of cousin marriage and estimates as to its extent. It is freely available online at **tinyurl.com/arch-jssl-marriage**.

BOOK

Marriage Law for Genealogists, 2nd Edn
Rebecca Probert
Takeaway, 2016
Rebecca's guide explains the law governing who could marry (and remarry), including the prohibited degrees. Her earlier book *Divorced, Bigamist, Bereaved?* (Takeaway, 2015) explored separation, widowhood and remarriage.

WEBSITE

ANCESTRY
w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/2465**
The collection 'England & Wales, Civil Divorce Records, 1858–1918' includes petitions for nullity on the basis of the prohibited degrees.

WONDERFUL WHISKERS

Alun Withey traces the evolution of men's facial hair during the 19th century, and reveals what it can tell us about our ancestors

ALUN WITHEY is a senior lecturer in history at the University of Exeter. His blog **dralun.wordpress.com** includes various articles on the history of beards

One of the greatest thrills in family history research is surely finding a previously unknown photograph of an ancestor. There is nothing quite like seeing the actual face of a past member of your family for the first time and perhaps looking for a resemblance. However, if the photo depicts a male relation and was taken in the second half of the 19th century, spotting a resemblance might be a bit trickier – because there is a strong likelihood that they will be wearing a beard.

Just after 1850, Britain was in the throes of nothing less than a revolution in 'pogonotrophy' – growing a beard or other facial hair. The trend even had a name: the 'beard movement'. For various reasons, such as nervousness about the pace of modern life and industrialisation, increasing calls by women for more power, and a more general sense that traditional manliness and authority was becoming domesticated and weak, there was a sense that men were under threat. Amidst all this anxiety and uncertainty, our male forebears sought some timeless and reassuring symbol to reconnect them with their masculinity. The answer, as it turned out, was right under their noses: beards.

What's more, the beard movement was not simply a British phenomenon. At around the same time facial hair became extremely fashionable in the USA, as well as many parts of Europe.

Fortunately, there was a ready host of beardy Victorian role models that men could look to. Soldiers returning home fresh from the Crimean War (1854–1856) often sported huge beards, grown while in the field. A new breed of explorers and climbers were coming back from the wilds with equally prodigious beards. As they regaled the public with their tales of peril and derring-do, their beards symbolised adventures among rough terrain, harsh elements and perilous situations. For the poor office clerk, working in one of the many new menial administrative jobs that accompanied industrialisation, growing a beard at least offered the chance to mimic the look, if not the lifestyle. Better still, it was a cheap and

easy choice. To look and feel like a Victorian superman, all you had to do was simply stop shaving.

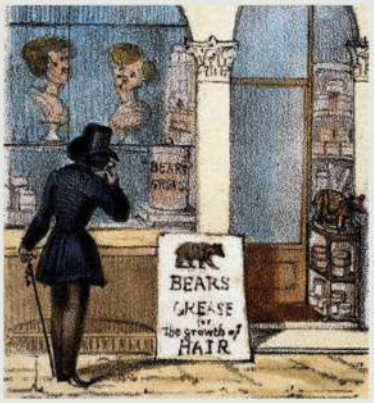
Press Backlash

Beards were very soon the coming thing, and by 1852 were in full flourish. As so often happens with new fashions, there was an initial backlash, with articles and cartoons in the press mocking the new trend as excessive and unruly. This swiftly passed, however, and support for beards, like the whiskers themselves, came thick and fast. A range of articles began to appear, extolling the virtues of facial hair as a supposedly timeless symbol of masculine strength and hardiness. In typically florid Victorian prose, writers praised ▶

GETTY IMAGES / WELLCOME COLLECTION

How To Build A Beard

Acquiring and maintaining an impressive beard was not always easy



GROWING

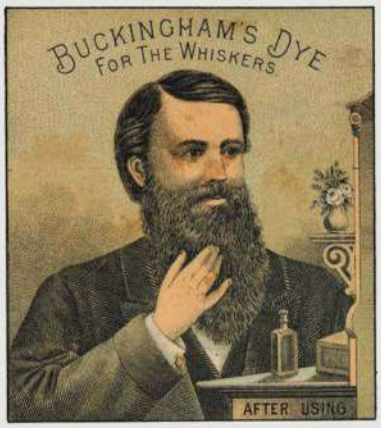
Thankfully, there were solutions if you were not able to grow your own beard. Perfumers and specialist makers promised a prodigious beard in weeks through just a few drops of their lotion. 'Russia Oil' was one of many, claimed to make hair "grow thick and long, even in bald places, whiskers, eye-brows &c". If that failed then ingenious false beards (and 'whisker wigs') could be purchased.

MAINTAINING

Barbers were traditionally the main providers of shaving, trimming and maintaining beards. In fact, long before they were haircutters, barbers were shavers. Just like today, 19th-century barbershops were important spaces for men, enabling them to meet and gossip.

REFINING

Men could keep their own whiskers in trim. Our forebears might maintain their facial hair's edges and lines with a razor, and use beard brushes to ensure both lustre and cleanliness. Special moustache combs allowed a final flourish to the beloved 'tache – a process that Hercule Poirot himself would be proud of.



DYEING

Just like head hair, beard hair can be an important marker of ageing. But for Victorian men who didn't agree with the sentiment that white beards symbolised wisdom, products like Buckingham's Dye for the Whiskers and John Chasson's 'Incomparable Fluid' offered the chance to restore a greying beard to "natural shades of black, brown or blonde".

▶ beards as "manly appendages", "hairy ornaments" and even "the hairy honours of men's chins". A beard was, various authors claimed, an outward symbol of inner strength and virility.

Some of the most vocal support came from the medical profession, who endowed the beard with a range of potential health benefits. These included protecting the voice and throat by acting as a natural 'respirator'. A number of physicians also claimed that a beard helped to regulate extremes of temperature when moving quickly between warm and cold environments – something that was believed to cause illness. Furthermore, it was recommended that men who worked in dusty trades, such as masons, carpenters and railway workers, would benefit from a thick beard since it would catch particles of dust before they could be inhaled and damage their lungs.

This idea was taken even further by the press, who depicted the beard as a virtual *cordon sanitaire* that would trap germs before they could infect the body. The obvious problem is that a bearded man was therefore constantly carrying a nest of viruses around on his face.

Being unable to grow a beard could be viewed as a mark of shame

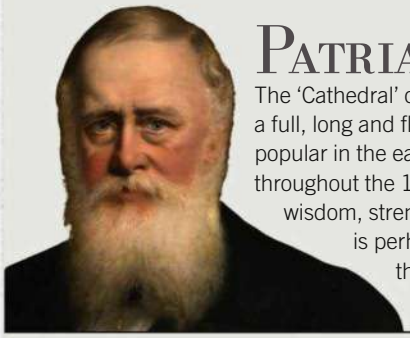
Fake It 'Til You Make It

Indeed, a beard was so important to the concept of healthy masculinity that being unable to grow one could be viewed as a mark of shame, and beardless men might be seen as hardly men at all. New products began to come onto the market claiming to give even the smoothest-faced man a luxuriant crop in just a couple of weeks. Even if that failed, there were other options. False beards were available in a variety of styles, shades and colours; some even came with springs and wires to help them adhere to the face.

For older men, perhaps self-conscious about their greying fronds, help was at hand in the form of commercially available beard and whisker dyes, offering the chance to restore the beard to its original shade. Equally though, a thick white beard could also be regarded as a symbol of the wisdom of age, and a life well

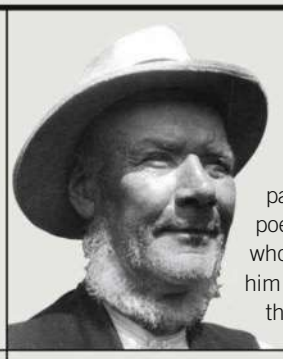
SIX STYLES

The styles of beard you are most likely to see in Victorian photos



Patriarch

The 'Cathedral' or 'Patriarch' beard was a full, long and flowing beard that was popular in the early modern period and throughout the 19th century. It embodied wisdom, strength and even virility, and is perhaps the style of facial hair that is most associated with the Victorian era.

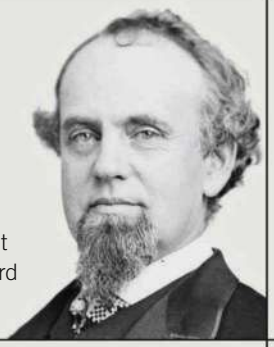


Neck Beard

This was a more extreme version of the Chin Beard, and was often sported by labourers and rural workers in particular. A notable wearer was the US poet and essayist Henry David Thoreau, who in an 1855 letter claimed that it made him very popular with the ladies… a fact that was disputed by his friends.

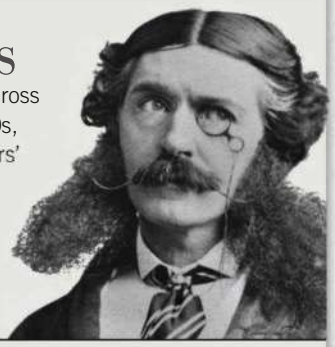
Goatee

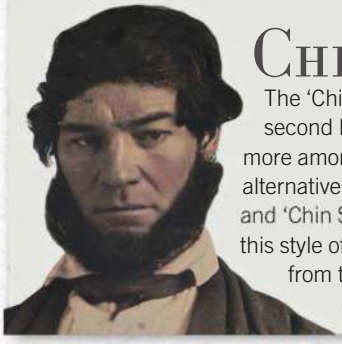
The 'Goatee' was less popular than the Patriarch. The style was so named because it resembled the tufty hair on the chin of a goat, and varied from neatly trimmed to long and bushy. Goatees were usually accompanied by a moustache, but some gentlemen preferred to let their beard speak for itself *(pictured)*.



Side Whiskers

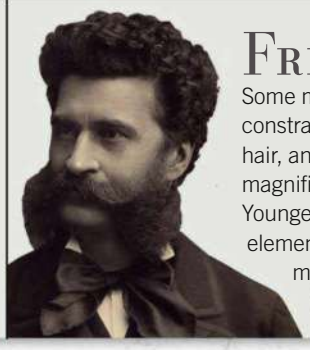
This fashion has come and gone across history, appearing in the early 1800s, and again after 1850. 'Side Whiskers' varied from small sideburns to huge outcrops down the sides of the face. One extreme version was the 'Piccadilly Weepers' or 'Dundreary Whiskers' *(pictured)*.





Chin Beard

The 'Chin Beard' became popular in the second half of the 19th century, seemingly more among middle-aged and older men; alternative names were the 'Chin Curtain' and 'Chin Strap'. There were various forms of this style of facial hair, but the name comes from the longer version that dangled down off the chin like a waterfall.



Freestyle

Some men were clearly not prepared to be constrained by just one version of facial hair, and instead chose to freestyle it. The magnificently hirsute Johann Strauss the Younger *(pictured)* combined various elements including a spectacular 'Imperial' moustache connected to large 'muttonchop' sideburns.

GETTY IMAGES

A pair of working-class men wear top hats and moustaches to imitate the upper class, 1854

WELLCOME COLLECTION

spent. As an article published in the US magazine *The Crayon* in 1859 put it, "There is, now, the distinguishing feature of a man. And in the autumn of life what dignity, what gravity does not its massive length give to the man laden with wisdom's fruit matured? When half a hundred winters have blown their snows and sleets upon it, until it has become as white as they are, how venerable does the patriarch look!"

Style It Out

What was the most popular style of beard for men? When we think of the archetypal Victorian gentlemen, perhaps the main image that springs to mind is that of the long, full, thick beard known sometimes as the 'Patriarch' beard, reminiscent of a much older style, popular in the Renaissance, known as the 'Cathedral' beard. These were indeed very popular. The longer the beard, it was said, the stronger the man.

But by no means was this the only popular style. There were lots of variations in the length and shape of facial hair, which could vary according to factors including age and class. After being a popular look in the early 1800s, moustaches had fallen from favour, although there is good evidence suggesting that moustaches were sometimes still popular among young men in their twenties. There were indeed many styles, ranging from the bushy 'Imperial' to the tiny 'Toothbrush'.

'Side Whiskers' was another popular style, seemingly among middle-aged men, and an often-forgotten fashion in facial hair. This too came in many variations. One was the so-called 'Dundreary Whiskers' named after a character – Lord Dundreary – in a successful play. Also known as 'Piccadilly Weepers', these huge, pendulous and sometimes pointy appendages of beard hair hung off the face like two fronds of wisteria. Another variation was the 'Chin Beard', AKA the 'Chin Curtain' or 'Chin Strap'. This was again popular with men of a certain age, and involved shaving the cheeks and moustache, leaving a band of beard hair that could either be kept as a short strip or longer and dangly.

However, not everyone decided to follow the fashion, and many men were clean-shaven throughout the beard movement. My research suggests, for example, that many barbershops remained extremely busy. At times, barbers even complained of being overwhelmed by queues of working-class men visiting on Saturday for their weekly shave, so that they would look clean and tidy in church the next day.

Indeed, by the end of the 19th century, beards were on the way out. As often happens, rather than disappearing overnight, beard fashions have a tendency to get gradually smaller, lingering for a while before a final return to the shaved face. In this case, the last decades of the 1800s saw beards shrink to moustaches before, at its very end, finally giving way to the sleek, modern, shaved look of a new century.

Touchstone Of Masculinity

It is easy to dismiss facial hair as just a quirky sidenote to history, but it tells us a lot about expectations of manliness and male appearance in the past. Sensing change in the air, Victorians turned to their beards as a comforting, perhaps even healthy, touchstone of masculinity. So when we look again at those family photographs and see the bearded, whiskered, moustachioed or even shaved faces of our predecessors staring back at us, we might reflect on what their own personal story was and what beards meant to them. Behind every beard and every style lay a choice; and those choices can tell us a great deal about the world that they lived in.

Resources

Take your research further

ARTICLE

The Beard Maketh the Man
Eleanor Rycroft
History Today Vol. 69 No. 9, September 2019
This excellent article about the importance of beards during the Renaissance is freely available online at **historytoday.com/history-matters/beard-maketh-man**.

BOOKS

Concerning Beards
Alun Withey
Bloomsbury, 2021
Alun's accessible history of facial hair covers 1650–1900, and discusses the meaning of beards, medical implications and the importance of barbers, as well as the material culture of shaving.

Moustaches, Whiskers and Beards
Lucinda Hawksley
National Portrait Gallery, 2014
This book reproduces images held by the National Portrait Gallery to explore lots of different styles of facial hair and share fascinating titbits from beard history.

Of Beards and Men
Christopher Oldstone-Moore
University of Chicago Press, 2015
Subtitled *The Revealing History of Facial Hair*, this book explains what beards have meant in society from ancient times right up to the modern day.

WEBSITE

WELLCOME COLLECTION CONCEPTS: BEARDS
w **tinyurl.com/wellcome-brds**
This valuable resource for anyone who is interested in the history of beards includes digitised books, documents and pictures.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?®

TRY A ONE MONTH

FREE TRIAL

To the digital edition

Tap here for your **FREE TRIAL**

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

If you love family history, then why not have *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, the UK's best-selling family history magazine publication, delivered straight to your computer, tablet or smartphone? With a digital subscription to *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* you can enjoy our easy-to-follow advice and news of the latest online releases wherever you are.

Have *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* Delivered Straight To Your Device

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

Simply Tap The Logo Below To Try A Free Trial To The Digital Edition

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

'My Ancestor Was On The Cutty Sark's Hell Voyage'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

When Cathy MacLeod discovered that her great great grandfather was carpenter on the *Cutty Sark*, she had no idea of the trials he faced on one of the iconic ship's voyages, she tells **Claire Vaughan**

Battered and bruised, the *Cutty Sark* limped into a specially built dry dock at Greenwich, South-East London, in 1954, needing extensive restoration work before it could open as a floating museum. Built in Dumbarton, Scotland, in 1869, this famous clipper with an advanced, sleek design and large sails had once raced across the waves to bring tea to Britain in record time. It was put to the test on many occasions, encountering icebergs and facing violent gales and raging seas. Cathy MacLeod, a descendant of the clipper's carpenter who lives in Newbury, Berkshire, knows more than most about this astonishing ship. Her own journey started with an undated sepia photograph depicting a large family group.

My mother thought someone in the family had something to do with the *Cutty Sark*

Cathy's mum recognised her own mother, aged about 10, in the photo. She believed that her Holford great great grandmother was depicted too. "My mother always said she thought that someone in the family had something to do with the *Cutty Sark*, and that one of the Holfords was the most likely candidate. She wasn't sure whether they helped build the ship or sailed on it. So I decided to look into it."

Cathy searched at the London Metropolitan Archives (now The London Archives; **thelondonarchives.org**) for details of the Holfords. "One of the first things I found was the bound marriage register for my great great grandparents – that was a 'wow' moment." It showed that on 13 November 1858 Edward Holford had married Hester Sarah Berry Lark in Limehouse, East London.

Jack Spurling's painting of the record-breaking tea clipper *Cutty Sark* from 1924

A Shipwright In The Census

"I looked for the family in the census, and found Edward Holford listed as a 'shipwright at sea' on the 1881 census. This told me I was on the right track, so I continued investigating."

Using church records, she managed to piece Edward's early life together. He was born to William Holford and Phillis Potter in the village of Findon, West Sussex, and was baptised on 6 March 1831. "Edward left school around the age of 10 and started work as a labourer, before following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather and great grandfather by becoming a carpenter," says Cathy. Edward found work in one of the shipyards in Shoreham on the south coast and then Limehouse, a major centre for shipbuilding. ▶

GETTY IMAGES / UNP/JAMES NEWELL

Cathy has used many sources to uncover Edward Holford's experiences on the *Cutty Sark*

Searching online, Cathy discovered more clues: "I found an account called *The Ordeal of the Cutty Sark* by Charles Arthur Sankey, an apprentice on the clipper (**johnsankey.ca/ordeal.html**). He mentioned something called the 'Hell Voyage'." In this version of events, the carpenter is only referred to as "Chips" though.

The book *The Crews of the Cutty Sark* by SF Bailey (The Cutty Sark Society, 1989) was more forthcoming. "It confirmed Edward's voyages and wages – and that he was, indeed, the carpenter mentioned in Charles' account. There are also some crew lists online, which listed Edward's surname as Walford, and the 1881 census for Melbourne, Australia, where it was Halford."

Years At Sea

These crew lists showed that Edward joined the *Cutty Sark* in November 1877, sailing to China, Australia and the USA. "Apart from two months back home in the spring of 1880, he was away until May 1882. He received £6 a month, half of which he asked to be paid directly to his wife." Cathy used all these accounts along with newspaper reports to build up a timeline of the *Cutty Sark*'s voyages and see where Edward fitted in.

She has visited the clipper at Royal Museums Greenwich (**rmg.co.uk/cutty-sark**) several times, and was there at the reopening in May 2012, five years after it had been damaged in a fire. "It was really good to see the ship, and the carpenter's workshop and where Edward would have slept."

The carpenter would have had two wooden chests – one for his tools and another for his possessions. A cousin Cathy met through her research told her that a relative in Australia had one of Edward's wooden chests. "I'd love that – to have something personal relating to Edward."

Cathy also took her nieces to see the ship. "There was a display board containing information about the 'Hell Voyage'. I started to tell them about it, sharing more details about the journey. When I finished, there was quite a crowd of people standing around me who were fascinated." It's a compelling tale, including murder and cover-up, suicide, a cholera outbreak and near-starvation.

The clipper set sail in 1880 under the leadership of Captain James Wallace. According to Charles Sankey, "Wallace was a splendid seaman, kindly and interested in the apprentices, with always a friendly word to any of our crowd." Of Cathy's ancestor, he writes, "Our carpenter 'Chips', had fallen in love with the ship… He knew every timber and bolt."

A Fatal Fight

Charles recounts how, early in the voyage, ill-feeling between the crew boiled over into several fights between one of the deckhands John Francis and the first mate Sidney 'Bucko' Smith. "What occurred in the next few seconds, no one saw. We heard a sharp crack, a blood curdling yell, followed by a dull thud, as we rushed forward. Francis was down, out cold. He never regained consciousness and died three days later."

When the *Cutty Sark* next docked, at Anjer, Indonesia, the captain smuggled Mr Smith off the ship to relieve the growing tensions on board. The next stop was Yokohama in Japan. The account continues, "Captain Wallace had no sooner helped the mate to escape when he realised the position he had placed himself in. He knew there would be an official investigation when he got to Yokohama and with little doubt he would be held responsible for the mate's escape." Not only this, but he now had a mutinous crew to deal with.

Basil Lubbock, in *The Log of the Cutty Sark* (James Brown, 1924, and available from the Internet Archive at **tinyurl.com/arch-lubbock**), suggests that Edward was one of the last people to see the captain alive. He writes, "On the fourth day after leaving Anjer, the watch had just been called at 4am, when the captain, who was standing at the break of the poop with the carpenter, turned to his faithful petty officer

3

GREAT RACE

OF THE

TEA SHIPS,

WITH THE FIRST

NEW SEASON'S TEAS.

PRICE OF TEAS REDUCED.

THE "Taeping," "Ariel," "Fiery Cross," and "Serica" have arrived, with others in close pursuit, with something like FORTY-FIVE MILLION POUNDS OF NEW TEA on board—half a year's consumption for the United Kingdom. This enormous weight coming suddenly into the London Docks, Shippers are compelled to submit to MUCH LOWER PRICES, in order to make sales.

We are thus enabled to make a Reduction of FOURPENCE in the pound.

4/0 down to - - 3/8
3/8 „ - - 3/4
3/4 „ - - 3/0
And so on downwards.

We may add the above Ships have brought a few lots of most unusual fine quality.

Reduction takes place on Friday the 21st inst.

108, OXFORD STREET; 97, STRETFORD ROAD; and 171, STRETFORD ROAD—"Great Northern." } BURGON & CO., TEA MERCHANTS.

Above: the speed of tea clippers was vital
Below: a portrait of Edward Holford

Edward's widow Hester *(centre)* with his six children, their spouses and their children, including Cathy's grandmother Esther as a young girl at Hester's feet, c1910

and asked if the second mate was on deck. 'Chips' replied that he was just coming up. Whereupon Captain Wallace left the carpenter and walked aft: called the helmsman's attention to the course; then deliberately stepped onto the taffrail and jumped overboard… no trace of the captain was ever found, though a number of sharks swimming furiously about gave only too clear an indication of his fate."

on board ship conditions became desperate. A number of the men suddenly were taken alarmingly ill. In agony they rolled on the deck, cursing and vomiting." It was cholera and most of the crew caught it, but Edward was one of the lucky ones. Two men died, and many were too weak to do anything but lie in their bunks. Nevertheless the captain went ashore to the local court to get an order to force them to work.

It's great to know that my ancestor was part of the *Cutty Sark*'s story

Wallace was replaced as captain by a William Bruce, but according to Charles, "Our new captain was a great contrast to Captain Wallace. At best he was a miserable coward as a sailor." In fact, he was a lazy, drunken bully.

Not long after Bruce took over, the ship stopped at Singapore and most of the crew were paid off. "Of the crew that left England, Edward was one of only five who remained on board – four apprentices and him. He seems to have been a very loyal and much-loved individual," says Cathy. Bruce hired less expensive, less capable men for the next leg.

In 1881, at Shanghai in China, the crew was given a 'liberty day'. "Some of the men had caught an infection in some of the low dives frequented on shore, and our berth became infected," Charles writes. "Our captain had stayed cosily on shore… while

"The judge ordered an investigation, and on advice from the port doctor he censured the captain severely," Charles adds.

A Starving Crew

Later in the voyage the captain, needing to make good his losses, reduced the crew's food provisions. Then, after they had already been on half rations for some time, he put them on quarter rations near Bermuda. Things had got desperate. Charles explains, "The men approached the second mate, 'Take charge of the ship. Put into Bermuda for supplies before we all starve.'" Thankfully a passing steamer, the HMS *Thalia*, saw their distress signal and gave them provisions.

"It was a notorious time for that ship, and I'm proud that my great great grandfather was part of it," says Cathy. "The various accounts gave me a real sense of how dangerous it was, and what a difference the captain could make to the outcome of a voyage."

But what happened to Edward after he left the *Cutty Sark*? "As far as I know, he returned to the family home and continued working as a shipwright, presumably in the dockyards in London. He died in Charing Cross Hospital in 1902 aged 71.

"*Cutty Sark* was an iconic ship, the fastest tea clipper – there was nothing like it. It was famous in its day, and still is. It's great to know that my ancestor Edward was part of its story."

Resources

These are the main resources Cathy used in her research

CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Diaries, journals, ships' logs and other accounts can be a gold mine of information about an event that your ancestor was involved in. Cathy consulted *The Log of the Cutty Sark* by Basil Lubbock (James Brown, 1924) and *The Ordeal of the Cutty Sark* by Charles Arthur Sankey, both of which are available online.

MUSEUM

ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH

a Greenwich, London SE10 9NF
t 020 8858 4422
e *RMGenquiries@rmg.co.uk*
w **rmg.co.uk/cutty-sark**

The *Cutty Sark* is moored at Royal Museums Greenwich. The clipper's original crew lists are held by the National Maritime Museum on the same site.

WEBSITE

BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

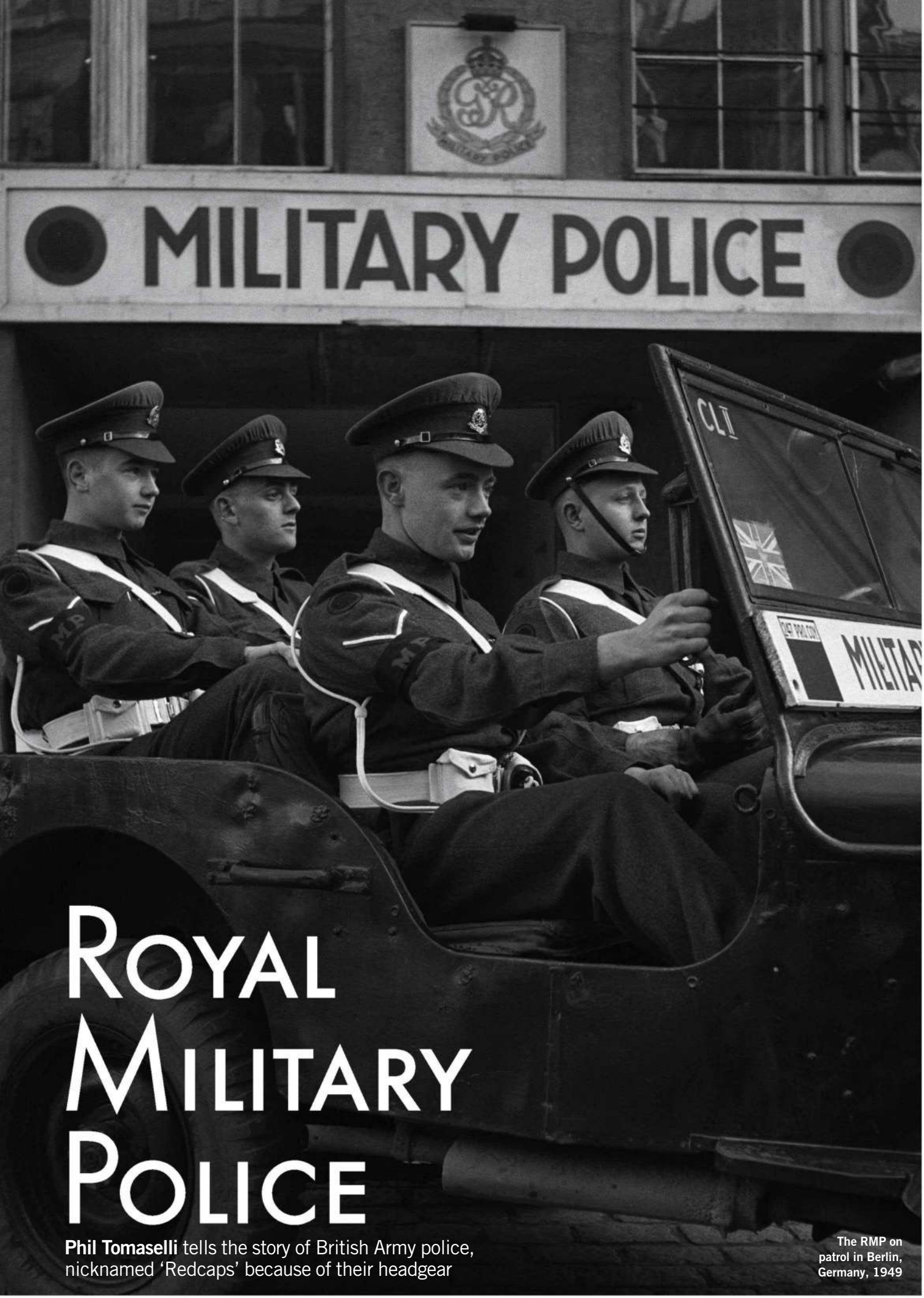
w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**

The *Cutty Sark* was the most advanced clipper of its day and because of the great interest in its speed, it often appeared in newspaper reports. This meant that Cathy was able to follow its movements with relative ease.

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*



Royal Military Police

Phil Tomaselli tells the story of British Army police, nicknamed 'Redcaps' because of their headgear

The RMP on patrol in Berlin, Germany, 1949

GETTY IMAGES

Discipline separates an army from a mob, however violent that mob may be, and gives the soldier an advantage. Since the Middle Ages maintaining discipline and order in the British Army has fallen to the provost marshal, who is represented in the field by the Corps of Royal Military Police (CRMP).

There were provost marshals at Crécy and Agincourt, and other campaigns in France. By 1500 a well-established Provost Service maintained military discipline. Both sides in the English Civil War appointed provost marshals and, when a Standing Army was created after 1660, the provost marshal was intrinsic but only acted when troops were on active service. By the 18th century individual provost marshals were assigned to garrisons, to formations abroad and to some regiments. Most regiments had their own Regimental Police who maintained discipline.

Members of the RMP outside the War Office in London before leaving Britain to serve in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1960

During the Peninsular War (1807–1814) General Sir Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) understood the need for control and discipline. French troops took provisions from Spanish and Portuguese peasants by force, so the local population fought a guerrilla war against them. Wellesley insisted that his men paid for everything and, to ensure their good behaviour, he created, in addition to his regular provosts, a volunteer mounted unit. This Staff Corps of Cavalry would specifically police the behaviour of his men, of whom he once commented, "I don't know what effect these men will have upon the enemy, but, by God, they frighten me." Spanish guerrillas, avenging French atrocities, gave invaluable assistance to Wellington as he advanced into Spain.

The Impact Of Waterloo

After Napoleon's defeat in 1814 the Staff Corps was disbanded but reformed shortly after the Battle of Waterloo the following year, remaining part of the British Army of occupation until it was withdrawn in 1819 and, again, disbanded.

In the 40 years of peace in Europe following Waterloo, the role of provost marshal reduced in importance (becoming a captain's responsibility). A Mounted Staff Corps was formed to assist the provost marshal ▶

Anthony Bagot Corbett

How one sergeant earned a Distinguished Conduct Medal

Anthony Bagot Corbett's service perfectly illustrates one role of the CMP during the Second World War. Born on the Isle of Wight in 1912, he was an assistant teacher in Margate in September 1939, but enlisted shortly afterwards. Corbett was rapidly promoted to sergeant in the Provost Company of 50th Division, and played a crucial role in Operation Dynamo in 1940, in which more than 338,000 Allied soldiers were evacuated from Dunkirk in northern France.

His recommendation reads: "In the early hours of 2 June 1940 Sergeants Naish and Corbett were on the mole at Dunkirk with a large number of men of various units under (heavy) shell fire. As ships were not immediately available it was necessary to clear the mole before daybreak as otherwise heavy casualties might have ensued through air and (artillery) bombardment. These two NCO's set a great example by their courage and coolness and regardless of their personal safety persuaded many men to march back to the beach from the mole. Subsequently they assisted in embarking 159 men who would otherwise have remained in an exposed position on the mole. Sgt Naish also received the DCM."

Royal Navy vessels alongside the pier at Dunkirk

Corbett was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps in October 1940, served in North Africa, where he married an army nurse, and in Italy, where he was mentioned in dispatches. On 14 April 1954 he was transferred to the Reserve of Officers and given the honorary rank of major. He died in Salisbury in 2003.

GETTY IMAGES

Members of the MP serving with the British Army in France during the First World War, courtesy of Adam,Rouilly Ltd

during the Crimean War (1853–1856), but was dissolved after the peace.

The true ancestor of the modern MP was born in 1855 when the War Department bought a large area of land in Hampshire between Aldershot and Farnborough, creating a huge garrison with enough land for its soldiers to train on. Cavalry regiments were asked for non-commissioned officers and men of "five or ten years' service, sober habits, intelligent, active and capable of exercising a sound discretion" for a new unit "To be employed as a Corps of Mounted Police for the preservation of Good Order in the camp at Aldershot, *and for the protection of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood*" (author's italics). Soldiers were still regarded by many as thieves and vagabonds in uniform.

DID YOU KNOW?

From the mid-19th century onwards, recruits to the MP have been drawn from slightly older, well-educated soldiers who already have experience in other units.

Horseback Heroes

In 1877 the Military Mounted Police (MMP) was formed as a separate unit for service in Britain and abroad, seeing fighting in Egypt and the Sudan. The Military Foot Police (MFP) was created in 1882, again for service in Egypt. There were no MPs in South Africa at the start of the Second Boer War in October 1899, and a small draft of men was rushed out. By the end of November there were 150 men in South Africa or en route. Nearly every member of the MMP or MFP served either in South Africa or in vital garrisons abroad during the Second Boer War, and some saw action against Boer commandos. One MMP courier had his horse shot from under him, but concealed his messages beneath its body. The Boers stripped him naked, and left him. Four days later, still naked, he walked into camp carrying his vital communications!

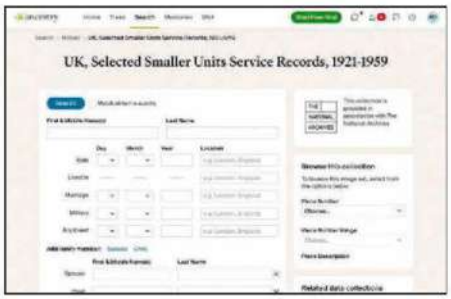
The First World War saw the transformation of the MP from a small unit that was still mainly used to maintain discipline into a recognisably modern force. In August 1914 the whole strength was 508 all ranks, with a reserve of just 250, most of whom were civilian policemen. It soon became obvious that more would be needed.

Virtually the whole MMP and MFP were immediately deployed to France. Recruits were sought among former reservists and policemen and volunteers from other units, and training schools were set up. By 1918 more than 25,000 men were serving.

During the Retreat from Mons in 1914 hundreds of

Expert Picks

Phil recommends these online resources for researching your ancestor who served in the MP



Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62683**

Search service records for other ranks (1921–1959). The site has surviving records from the First World War too, as does Findmypast.

Corps Of Military Police

w **corpsofmilitarypolice.org**

This site has a database of 56,302 CMP, CMP (India) and RMP soldiers, which has been compiled by the corps' museum.

Was There A Redcap In Your Family?

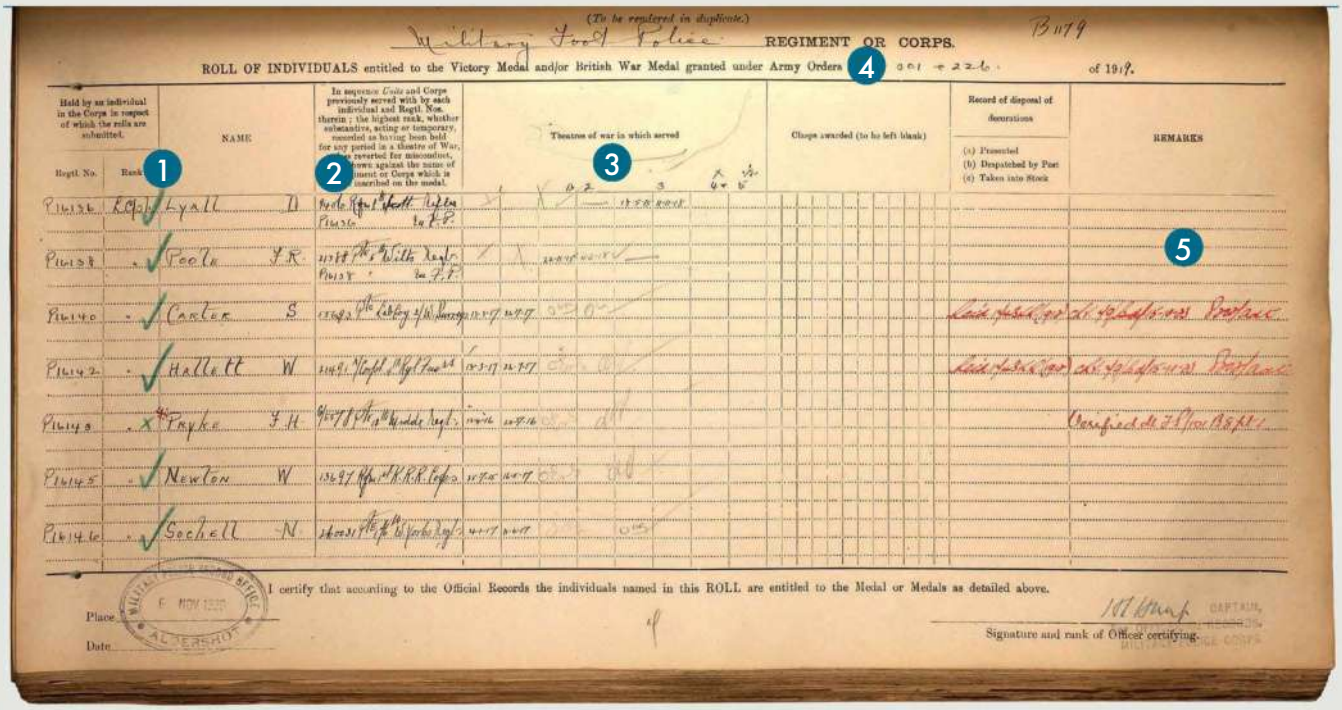
w **rmpmuseum.com**

This website from the corps' museum has information about its history, and a paid-for database covering 1813–1950.

ADAM,ROUILLY LTD

Medal Roll

The MFP and MMP First World War medal rolls are invaluable, giving details for men whose service records don't survive. They are held by The National Archives (**nationalarchives.gov.uk**), and available on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**)


(To be rendered in duplicate.)

Military Foot Police REGIMENT OR CORPS. B1179

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 4 001 + 226 of 1919.

Regtl. No.	Rank	NAME		Regiment or Corps	Theatres of war in which served	Clasps awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations	REMARKS
P16136	L/Cpl	Lyall	D					
P16138		Poole	F R					
P16140		Carter	S					
P16142		Hallett	W					
P16143		Payne	F H					
P16145		Newton	W					
P16146		Sechell	N					

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place

Date

Signature and rank of Officer certifying.

1 2 3 4 5

1 Personal Details

The first three columns give the MP number (note the prefix "P"), rank (usually lance-corporal), surname and initial.

2 Regimental Number

In addition to the regimental number, this column names the regiment and battalion from which the serviceman transferred to the MFP.

3 Theatres Of War

The numbers along the top of these columns indicate the foreign country in which the soldier served: 1 is France/Belgium, B2 Gallipoli, 3 is Russia, and 4 and 5 both indicate various campaigns in Africa.

4 Medals Earned

The medals earned are specified, in this case the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal. Note that men who served before 1916 will be recorded on an additional roll for the 1914 Star or 1914–15 Star.

5 Remarks

The notes here refer to medals returned undelivered and the correct spelling of a name, but may also include "KIA" (killed in action), "POW" (prisoner of war) or mentions of medals being voided.

men, separated from their units, were rounded up by cavalrymen and MP patrols who led them to safety in 'stragglers' posts' where they could be rested and guided on their way. Before the Battle of Neuve Chapelle the following year MPs assumed control of all traffic, selecting specific approach routes and directing the movement of convoys.

Traffic Control

By 1917 there were four Traffic Control Squadrons and four Traffic Control Companies moving around between the armies in France as fighting moved along the front. The MP assumed responsibility for security behind British lines, checking identity papers and travel permits, escorting prisoners of war, and clearing the battlefield of weapons, while its Special Investigation Branch (SIB) employed detectives – often undercover – seeking criminals, spies and other troublemakers.

The Special Investigation Branch (SIB) employed detectives seeking criminals

Because so many First World War service records were destroyed in 1940 during the Blitz, tracing individuals can be difficult. Ancestry has nearly 1,600 MFP service records and a similar number for the MMP in 'UK, British Army World War I Service Records, 1914–1920' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1219**), as well as 2,100 pension records for the MFP and 1,880 for the MMP in 'UK, British Army World War I Pension Records 1914–1920' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1114/**). Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) claims to have nearly 22,000 records within the vast collection 'Military, Armed Forces & Conflict in United Kingdom' (**bit.ly/fmp-uk-military**), though many are just names and numbers on scraps of paper – but they may offer clues. Other clues can be garnered from Medal Index Cards and medal rolls; the latter are on Ancestry in the collection 'UK, World War I Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920' (see ▶

the annotated document). Officer records are harder to locate – I can only find seven altogether on The National Archives' (TNA's) online catalogue Discovery (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**) in 'War Office: Officers' Services, First World War, Long Number Papers (numerical)' WO 339 and 'War Office: Officers' Services, First World War, Personal Files (Alphabetical)' WO 374, but suspect that many officers who transferred are noted under their original regiment.

Between the wars an SIB branch served alongside uniformed colleagues in the Rhine Army in Germany, with the Shanghai Defence Force, in Palestine in 1936, and provided support to garrisons in Hong Kong, Aden, Malta and elsewhere. In 1926 the MMP and MFP merged to form the Corps of Military Police (CMP), which became the CRMP in 1946.

Finding WW2 Records

During the Second World War the CMP served on every front. For men who served between 1921 and 1959 a full service record (one or two personal details may be redacted) for 'other rank' members of the CMP or the CRMP may already be online. The corps was selected for Ancestry's 'UK, Selected Smaller Units Service Records, 1921–1959' collection, which is searchable by name and number at **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62683**. Each soldier has his own file which probably contains attestation forms (documents created upon initial recruitment or transfer between units), a statement of service (a list of the soldier's postings while in service), B102 tracer cards (used to trace movements and promotions), and B103 service and casualty forms (an expanded version of the military service providing in-depth details). From these it should be possible to trace units served in and their War Diaries using Discovery; for advice, see **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-operations-second-world-war#3-unit-war-diaries**.

Service records for officers who served in the MP or RMP are still held by the Ministry of Defence, and can be applied for online at **www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-records-of-service/apply-for-the-records-of-a-deceased-serviceperson**. You can also download and complete a form to apply by post.

TNA's medal citations for the MP from 1926–1945, in WO 373, are searchable by name and can be downloaded for free. This series also has citations for 260 RMP medal awards after 1945.

Since the Second World War the CRMP has served in almost every operational theatre including Korea. Korean War Diaries are in TNA's series WO 281; War Diaries for Operation Granby (the 1990–1991 Gulf War) relating to Provost Companies (the MP) are in WO 305 but not digitised. The same applies to the War Diary for 160 Provost Company in the Falklands. Those for service in Kosovo are in WO 305/9454.

Today's CRMP (about 2,500 strong) consists of the British Army's experts in investigation and policing. Alongside them the Military Provost Staff provides custodial facilities worldwide, while the Military Provost Guard Service protects bases in the UK from terrorists.

An officer in the RMP teaches proper posture in this photo from c1942

GETTY IMAGES

TOP TIP!

The website of the RMP's Regimental Headquarters includes fascinating histories, research tips and details of how to visit the museum: **rhqrmp.org/index.html**.

PHIL TOMASELLI has written several books on the military, and regularly answers readers' questions for *WDYTYA? Magazine*

Resources

Take your research further

BOOKS

The History of the Corps of Royal Military Police
Major SF Crozier
Naval and Military Press, 2014
This book covers the work of the corps in the Second World War on all fronts, and includes a roll of honour.

The Redcaps
GD Sheffield
Brassey's, 1994
This history of the RMP and its antecedents reaches back to the Middle Ages. It places special emphasis on the role of the corps controlling battlefield traffic during the First World War and post-1945 conflicts.

The Story of the Royal Military Police
AV Lovell-Knight
Leo Cooper, 1977
The official history of the RMP is also the story of the individual 'Redcap', and has plenty of photographs.

MUSEUM

ROYAL MILITARY POLICE MUSEUM
a **PP38, Old Stables, Southwick Park, Fareham, Hampshire PO17 6EJ**
t 02392 284372
e *museum@rhqrmp.org*
w **rhqrmp.org/rmp_museum.html**
The museum tells the story of the RMP, and can be visited by appointment.

WEBSITE

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION
w **cwgc.org**
CWGC's database includes details of 456 war dead from the CMP in the First World War, and 992 war dead in the Second World War.

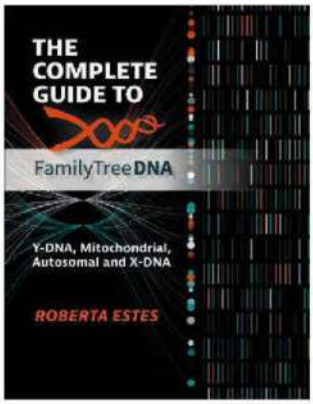
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FamilyTree**DNA**:

Y-DNA, Mitochondrial, Autosomal and X-DNA

By Roberta Estes

Just some of what's covered:

- **The science behind DNA tests – written for everyday people**
- **Y-DNA – Your Father's Story – types of markers and how to use your results**
- **Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) – Your Mother's Story – matches and what they mean**
- **Autosomal Family Finder Tests – Matches to all your family lines**
- **X-DNA – Your secret tool that's included with Family Finder**
- **An extensive glossary explaining the vocabulary associated with DNA testing.**



xv, 247 pp., profusely illus., paper. 2024. ISBN 978-0806321288.

Black and White print edition: 31.93 GBP
Color print edition: 47.36 GBP

ORDER from **www.amazon.co.uk** or **www.amazon.eu**

www.genealogical.com

Pharos Tutors

Guiding the route to your ancestors

Short topic-based **online courses** and **certificate programmes** in family history, local history and related topics.

Flexible options to fit around your learning needs.

Learn from the experts

START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY

www.pharostutors.com

AGRA MEMBER

Past Discoveries

apg member

UK Wide Family and House History Research

By a Qualified Professional Genealogist - Lisa Dunbar Dip. Gen. QG.

All enquiries are welcome. All types of genealogical research undertaken – including brief look-ups to full family histories, brick-walls in your research, house history research and bespoke bound family history books which are ideal as Birthday or Christmas presents. We also offer various family history packages.

Tel: +44 (0) 1279 651754
Mob: +44 (0) 7966 501874
www.pastdiscoveries.co.uk
enquiries@pastdiscoveries.co.uk

"IT'S THE BEST COURSE OUT THERE."

"IT EXCEEDED ALL MY EXPECTATIONS."

IHGS THE SCHOOL OF FAMILY HISTORY

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN GENEALOGY

WWW.IHGS.AC.UK

+44 (0) 1227 768664

ENQUIRIES@IHGS.AC.UK

"THIS COURSE IS A MUST."

"JUST BRILLIANT."

"THE KNOWLEDGE I HAVE GAINED FROM IT IS ALMOST IMMEASURABLE."

DON'T JUST READ *BBC COUNTRYFILE MAGAZINE*... LISTEN TO IT, TOO

Your chance for a weekly adventure in nature and the countryside with the *BBC Countryfile Magazine* team

You can find the Plodcast on all good podcast platforms

SPECIAL EDITION

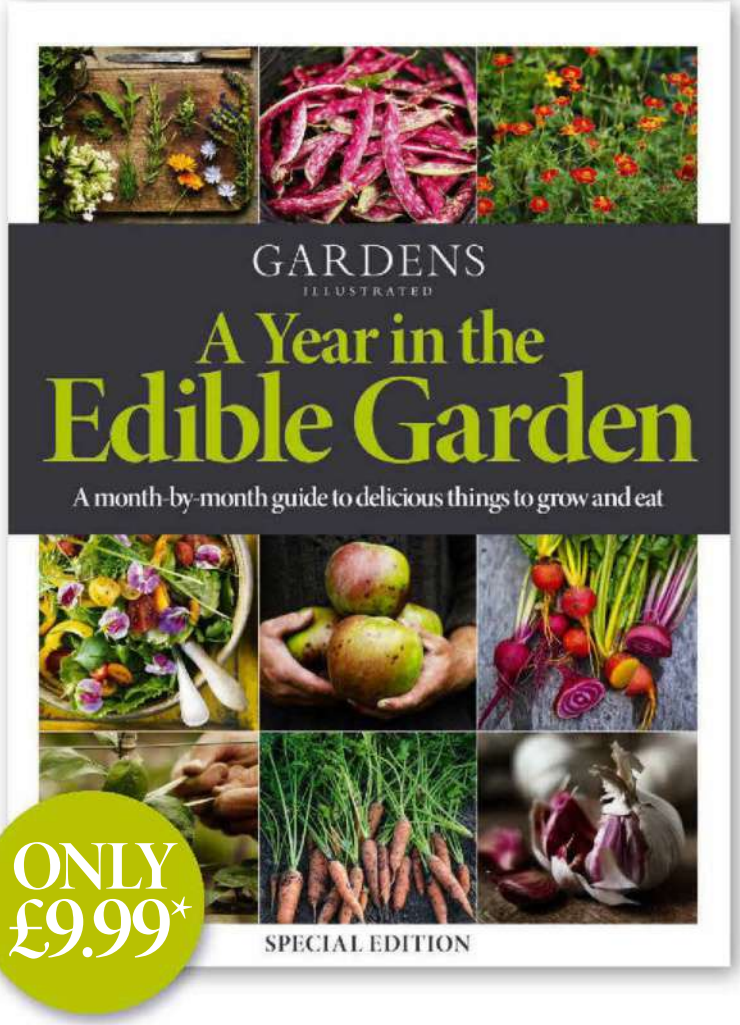
A Year in the Edible Garden

A month-by-month guide to delicious things to grow and eat

From herb expert Jekka McVicar's essential culinary herbs to Charles Dowding's kitchen gardening advice, and top British apple cultivars to the tastiest veg to grow, the team at *Gardens Illustrated* has cherry picked the best ideas about what to grow to eat for this special edition, for those who want to grow their own food.

There is practical advice with seasonal picking and eating ideas to provide month-by-month inspiration, plus a year-long sowing and growing guide, a harvesting calendar and recipes. Whether you are an experienced gardener-cook or simply someone who would like to grow more of what you eat, *A Year in the Edible Garden* is an invaluable guide to help you get growing in 2025.

With FREE UK delivery when you order direct



Seasonal advice and recipes for growing your own

Ideas from some of the most innovative productive gardeners

The best gear for growing your own and top tips for success

SCAN ME

Order your copy today

Order online at ourmediashop.com/EdibleGarden

or call us on 03330 162138† and quote 'Edible Garden'

This is an updated reissue of *A Year in the Edible Garden* (2020). *Price applies to UK orders only. Overseas prices, including postage, are £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for Rest of World. All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery. †UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free-minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free-call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am-1pm.

American War Of Independence

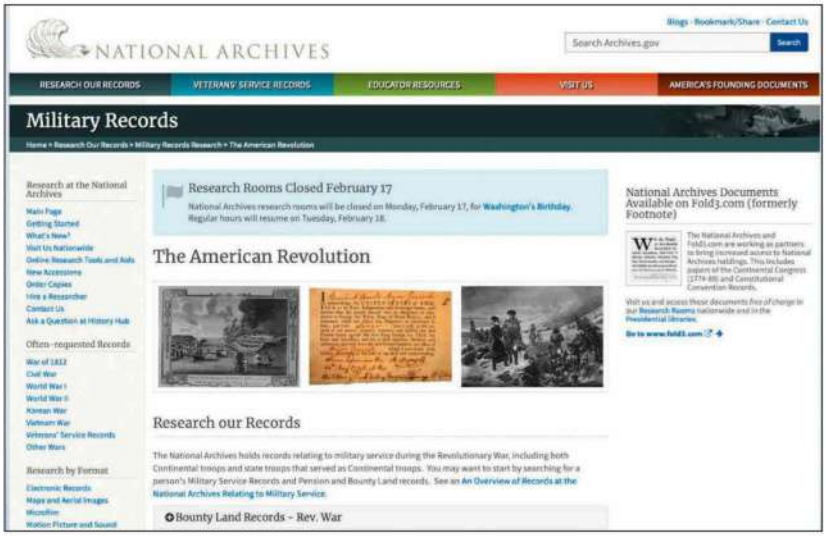
George Washington *(left)*, commander-in-chief of the Colonial Army, with his officers

Jonathan Scott shares online records of the war 250 years after the first shots were fired

Tension between Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies on the Atlantic coast had been increasing ever since the British gained dominance in North America with victory over the French in the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). The Boston Tea Party of 1773, when chests of tea were thrown into Boston Harbor, was the culmination of a growing resistance movement against British taxes on the colonies. This led to Parliament passing a series of punitive laws in 1774 – the Intolerable Acts – which would eventually spark off the American War of Independence.

One of the first actions was a munitions raid on British troops in Lexington and Concord in Middlesex County, Province of Massachusetts Bay, on 19 April 1775. And by the time the conflict came to a close at the 1783 Treaty of Paris, about 50,000 British soldiers, including British citizens in Canada, had taken part, suffering an estimated 24,000 casualties.

We've included resources for tracing participants on both sides of the conflict this month. Some of the records are behind paywalls, but many others are free to access.



US NATIONAL ARCHIVES

w **archives.gov/research/military/american-revolution**

If you're researching individuals who fought on the American side, this page details some of the records at the National Archives in Washington DC. Many have already been digitised and are at Fold3 (**fold3.com**), or Forces War Records (**uk.forceswarrecords.com**) in the UK. This page has sections on military service records, prisoners of war, court records and the Thirteen Colonies' Continental Congress. Via the Citizen Archivist Dashboard (**archives.gov/citizen-archivist**) you can help transcribe military pension files, which are mainly organised by location. These can contain valuable details about veterans and their families, such as rank, unit, period of service, age, residence, date and place of marriage, and date and place of death of spouse.

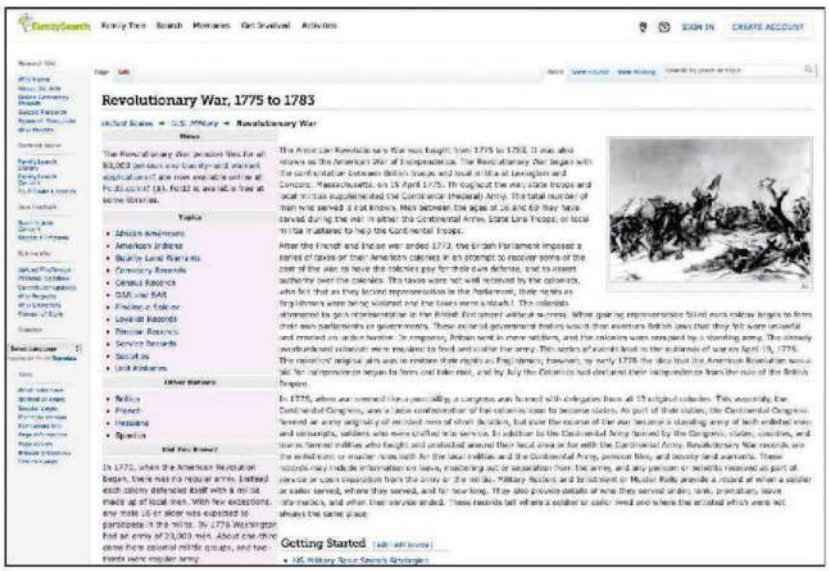
GETTY IMAGES

BEST WEBSITES

FORCES WAR RECORDS (FOLD3 IN THE USA)

w **uk.forceswarrecords.com/collection/us-revolutionary-war-uk/**

The military arm of Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has a number of sources useful for this topic. For those researching soldiers who fought on the British side, they include registers of service for units that served in Canada between 1756 and 1878. There's also Royal Hospital Chelsea Pensioner Admission and Discharge Records, which stretch back to 1715. These document soldiers discharged from the army or militia on account of disability. There's a similar collection for Irish soldiers (Royal Hospital Kilmainham). For US soldiers go to: **uk.forceswarrecords.com/collection/us-revolutionary-war-us** or **fold3.com/collection/us-revolutionary-war-us**.



FAMILYSEARCH

w **familysearch.org/en/wiki/Revolutionary_War,_1775_to_1783**

This page has a short history of the war, with links to sources of background reading including books on major battles (some are in the website's Digital Library), national and state archives, Congress and the Continental Army. There are links to free and subscription-based collections, as well as FamilySearch's own indexes. 'United States, Revolutionary War Compiled Service Records, 1775–1783', for example, is a database of about 80,000 US soldiers; the index is free, and Fold3/Forces War Records has the documents. And 'United States, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775–1783' has images of muster rolls, payrolls, strength returns, and other personnel, pay and supply records.

EXPERT'S CHOICE

Samantha Wilcoxson's *James Alexander Hamilton* and *Women of the American Revolution* are available from Pen & Sword

The drafting of the Declaration of Independence in 1776

My favourite website for researching the American Revolution is Founders Online (**founders.archives.gov**) from the US National Archives. I've made extensive use of the site while writing three of my books, both fiction and nonfiction, and I love the wealth of original information at my fingertips. The site is free to use and includes thousands of pages of digitised letters and documents written by and to those who had an impact on early US history.

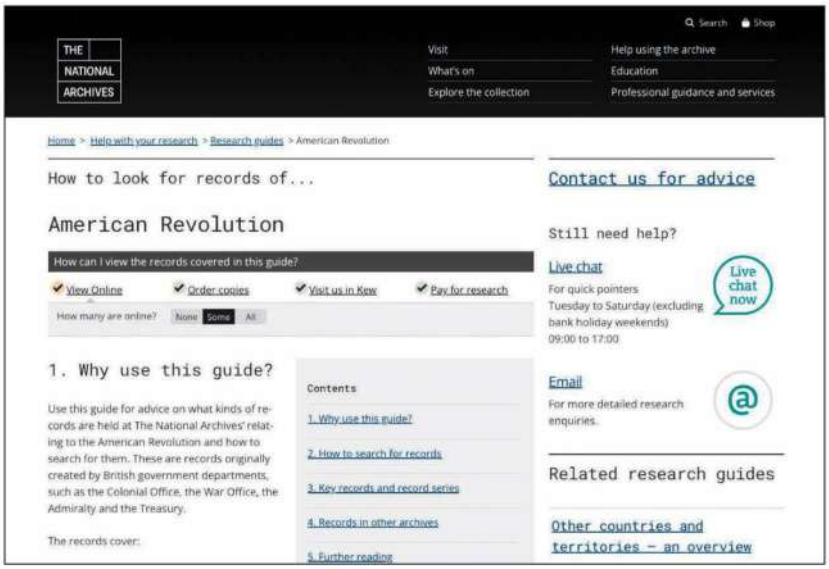
The name of the website does not indicate its true depth, because you can search for documents from the Colonial era starting in 1706 through to the Jacksonian era ending in 1836. Also not only men's correspondence is included, which has proved helpful to my research.

For example, the database includes 1,287 letters written by Abigail Adams, the wife of the second president John Adams and the mother of the sixth president John Quincy Adams.

Those performing family research can search for names and events, and can also filter and sort according to author, recipient and date. Since the collection is annotated, valuable results can be found where a name or term was indirectly referred to by the writer. For example, a search for my own last name brings up a letter that was written by John Adams with William Howard Wilcoxson mentioned in the annotated notes.

The documents are not all official correspondence, but include many personal missives, such as those between Founding Father Alexander Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler, both before and after she became his wife. Founders Online is a treasure trove of information for those with family links to the American Revolution.

GETTY IMAGES



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

w **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/american-revolution/**

This page gives a brief overview of the kinds of records that survive at The National Archives at Kew. Many of them relate to the wider colonial history of the British in America, but it's the military records of the era that are most likely to be of interest to family historians. Therefore you'll want to visit the guides to British Army soldiers and officers up to 1913, and the equivalent pages for researching personnel in the Navy. One potential source are the army muster rolls and pay lists (c1730–1898), which should provide enlistments, movements and discharges.

THE LOYALIST COLLECTION

w **loyalist.lib.unb.ca**

There were plenty of citizens who supported the British during the war, many of whom fled the new administration, taking refuge in British territories such as Nova Scotia in Canada. This website details the Loyalist Collection of British, US and early Canadian sources from c1760–1867. The collection has its origin in the late 1960s when a transatlantic project involving the likes of the University of London and the City University of New York was launched to identify, list and microfilm Loyalist sources in the USA, Great Britain and Canada. The site includes a database of about 6,000 Loyalists from New Brunswick, compiled by Canadian historian Esther Clark Wright.

Go Further

Nine more websites that are well worth visiting

ANCESTRY

w **bit.ly/anc-black-indig**

This collection records the names of Black and Native American soldiers in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War (1775–1783).

BILLIONGRAVES

w **billiongraves.com**

The database of GPS-tagged tombstone images could be useful for tracking down the resting place of relations who took part in the war.

CHRONICLING AMERICA

w **loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/**

This is a wonderful free gateway to the Library of Congress' digitised newspapers (1756–1963).

INTERNET ARCHIVE

w **tinyurl.com/arch-ward**

The site's books on the conflict include *The War of the Revolution* (1952) by Christopher Ward.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

w **tinyurl.com/loc-american-revolution**

Here you can familiarise yourself with the crucial documents relating to the American Revolution.

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

w **tinyurl.com/moma-patriots-color**

The Philadelphia museum's website includes the Patriots of Color Archive, featuring documents now available to search via Ancestry.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

w **libguides.nypl.org/militarygenealogy/revwar**

This page lists resources for researching soldiers.

STATE ARCHIVES

w **archives.gov/research/alic/reference/state-archives.html**

View details of state archives across the USA.

WIKIPEDIA

w **en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Continental_Army_units_(1776)**

Wikipedia's useful content about the conflict includes a list of units in the Continental Army.

You may be able to locate feet of fines for historic properties such as Brockley Hall in Somerset

Feet Of Fines

Alan Crosby explains how you can find and use these valuable records of property ownership

Feet of fines records relate to one of the central elements in land ownership – the legal process of transferring a property from one owner to another. In the medieval period the legal procedure focused on a final agreement (also known as a final concord) between the two parties involved: the purchaser (or querent) and the vendor (or deforciant). In its origin, in the mid-12th century, this was the conclusion to a legal device whereby the querent actually sued the deforciant for possession. They were not in fact in dispute, but a legal judgment resulted and this gave the transaction full authority. It was quickly realised that because the final concord was a way of creating a watertight and binding legal transfer, it could be used even when there was no dispute. All that was needed was for the concept to be retained.

From about 1300 the conveyance of a freehold property was processed by means of a completely fictitious legal case, which never in reality happened. The two parties simply consented to the transaction means of a final concord.

The agreement to convey the property was then written out three times on the same sheet of parchment, using identical wording: two side-by-side and the third at the bottom. The document was next cut into three parts, using an irregular zigzag or wavy line, so each contained the full version of the agreement. That was a security measure against forgery. If there was doubt about whether a certain document was genuine, two or three parts could be produced in court, and only the authentic portions would match perfectly.

The document was cut into three parts, using an irregular zigzag or wavy line

One part was given to the new owner and another to the vendor, for their own ▶

GETTY IMAGES

Feet Of Fines, 1328

These records were published in *Feet of Fines For the County of York, From 1327 to 1347 1–20 Edward III* edited by W Paley Baildon (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Vol. XLII, 1910). They have been digitised and are available from both TheGenealogist (**thegenealogist.co.uk**) and the Internet Archive (**archive.org**)

FEET OF FINES FOR YORKSHIRE. 9

his wife, def., of one messuage in DUNCASTRE: To hold to Elena and the heirs of her body, of Henry and Juliana and the heirs of Juliana; paying yearly one rose at the Nativity of St. John Baptist, for all service to them, and doing all services due to the chief lords; reversion to Henry and Juliana and the heirs of Juliana.

17. York. 1 Morrow of Souls, 2 Edw. III, 1328.

The Dean and Chapter of St. Peter's, York, by Roger de Shireburn, their attorney, quer., *Richard son of German le Orfeure* of York, def., of one messuage in YORK: To hold to the Dean and Chapter and their successors; they gave 4 marks.

18. York. Month of Michaelmas, 2 Edw. III, 1328.

Thomas de Sheffeld and *Agnes* his wife, 2 quer., *Roger de Mora* and *William Sauvage*, def., of 3 21 tofts, 27 bovates of land, and 8 acres of meadow, in ASKHAM[1]: To hold to Thomas and Agnes for their lives; remainder to Brian son of Gilbert de Stapelton, John son of the said Thomas, and William brother of the said John, for their lives; remainder to the right heirs of Agnes. John de Burel of Askham and Alice de Wescogh put in claims.

19. Westminster. Octave of Trinity, [? 2] Edw. III, [? 1328].
York. Month of Michaelmas, 2 Edw. III, 1328.

William son of Thomas de Boy[illegible], 4 quer., *Robert son of Robert de Berghby*, def., of the manor of BERGHBY near Seton,[2] which John son of Gilbert de [Roxeby ?] holds for life by the law of England, of the inheritance of Robert: To hold to William and his heirs after the death of John, who was present and consenting, and did fealty to William. William gave 100 marks.

20. York. Morrow of Souls, 2 Edw. III, 1328.

Robert son of John de Tours, quer., *John de Tours* and *Agnes* his wife, def., 5 two messuages, 2 bovates and 24 acres of land, and 4 acres of meadow, in ATHEWYK,[3] which Robert de Mar holds for life of the inheritance of Agnes: To hold to Robert son of John and the heirs of his body, after the death of Robert de Mar; remainder to Isabel sister of Robert son of John and her heirs. Warranty by John and Agnes, for themselves and the heirs of Agnes. Robert son of John gave £40. Robert de Mar consented, and did fealty. John son of 6 Nicholas de Tours put in a claim.

[1] Askham Brian, in the Ainsty. [2] Borrowby, parish of Lythe, N.R.
[3] Adwick-le-Street, near Doncaster.

1 Morrow Of Souls

The date is by regnal year, and gives the religious feast days instead of day and month. Note that all of the text featured here has been translated from the Latin, and is abbreviated.

2 Quer.

Here the querents are Thomas de Sheffeld and his wife Agnes; the deforciants ("def.") are Roger de Mora and William Sauvage.

3 21 Tofts

It is likely that all of the areas of land and sums of money referred to are generalised or approximations, to be regarded with caution.

4 Manor

In this entry a manor is being conveyed.

5 Two Messuages

Here parcels of land, including two messuages (sites for a dwelling-house), are being transferred. They are held by John because his wife Agnes had inherited them, probably from her father, and as a married woman her property was automatically owned by her husband.

6 John De Tours

This entry mentions other members of the family who might at some point be heirs to the property; another relative, John son of Nichols de Tours, has an interest.

A modern imagining of a medieval English town – feet of fines were introduced in the Middle Ages

records. The third part, which was lodged with a court for future reference, was from the bottom of the sheet, and hence was the 'foot'. The word 'fine' refers to the final concord.

The main sequence of final concords begins in 1182, and of feet of fines in 1195. They continued to be produced in enormous numbers until the early 1830s, by which time they had long been redundant. For the medieval period and up to the reign of Henry VIII they may well be the only surviving record of land transactions, but new procedures generally superseded them after the 1530s as improved forms of conveyance came into use, but the feet of fines continued to be kept regardless.

The most important collection of feet of fines is at The National Archives in Kew, covering England (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**). Individual copies for particular transactions may be found in local archives, among the estate collections of landowning families, but the survival rate of these is very variable.

Accessing TNA's Records

At TNA the records are generally found in the archives of the Court of Common Pleas (reference CP 25). For the palatinate county of Cheshire (1280–1831) the feet of fines are in CHES 31; for Lancashire (1377–1834) in PL 17; and Durham (1535–1834) in DURH 12. Welsh feet of fines have been transferred to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (**library.wales**). The feet of fines procedure did not operate in Scotland or Ireland.

TNA's main series of feet of fines CP 25 is arranged by county, regnal year and legal term. Cases where there was property in more than one county are grouped separately. There is no single unified index to these documents, but there are some contemporary indexes available in CP 26.

There are very few original feet of fines records online. TheGenealogist (**thegenealogist.co.uk**) has a small selection of published printed volumes of indexes, calendars and abstracts (mostly relating to Yorkshire) in its 'Landowner, Occupier & Tithe Records' collection. Ancestry has 'A Calender to the Feet of Fines for London & Middlesex, Richard I – Elizabeth I' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/34744**), and Findmypast has the collection 'Surrey Feet of Fines 1558–1760' (available at **search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/surrey-feet-of-fines-1558-1760**). A larger range of published volumes, for various counties, is on the Internet Archive (**archive.org/details/texts?tab=collection&query=feet+of+fines**).

If you have traced your ancestry back to the medieval period, feet of fines may give valuable clues in a time when few other documents are available. For example, a case in Somerset in 1256 involved Alice, daughter of Stephen de Lung, and Jordan Bengraunt and Joan his wife. It concerned portions of a 14-acre property at Badlesmere, and the document reveals that Joan was the sister of Alice, and co-heir of Stephen. Particularly for women, this sort of detail may not be otherwise recoverable.

TOP TIP!

Many county record societies have worked through the abbreviated Medieval Latin of feet of fines to publish indexes, calendars or abstracts. See if a volume exists for your region.

Resources

Take your research further

WEBSITES

ANGLO-AMERICAN LEGAL TRADITION

w **aalt.law.uh.edu/CP25(1)a.html**

This site, run by the Law Center at the University of Houston, Texas, USA, includes a large collection of clear images of original feet of fines, but identifying which you need will require use of other indexes such as TNA's (see below).

MEDIEVAL GENEALOGY

w **medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/index.shtml**

The Medieval Genealogy website is very informative with a number of helpful links, including one to a list of published editions that is arranged by county.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

w **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-feet**

TNA's helpful and straightforward research guide covering feet of fines is essential reading.

ALAN CROSBY is the editor of *The Local Historian* and a columnist for *WDYTYA? Magazine*

GETTY IMAGES

HURTIGRUTEN

Live the legend of Norway

Since 1893, Hurtigruten has been the heart of Norwegian coastal travel. Sail with us to experience authentic journeys with unmatched expertise and unforgettable scenery.

SAVE UP TO 20%
on selected Norwegian cruises
Book by 28th April

ADDITIONAL 5%
discount for Cruise Collective Members
Simply quote HN-UK-TCC

Original VOYAGES

Our famous route connecting local communities to 34 ports since 1893.

THE COASTAL EXPRESS
Bergen – Kirkenes – Bergen
12 days from £1,842pp
Including flights from London
24th Nov 2025 departure

Signature VOYAGES

Our premium range with all-inclusive dining and beverages to our top handpicked destinations.

THE NORTH CAPE LINE
Oslo – Honningsvåg – Oslo
15 days from £2,715pp
Including flights from London
7th Nov 2025 departure

THE SVALBARD LINE
Bergen – Svalbard – Bergen
16 days from £4,817pp
Including flights from London
26th Aug 2025 departure

Call 0203 553 0827 | Visit hurtigruten.com

TRUSTED SINCE 1893
AUTHENTICALLY NORWEGIAN
NORWAY'S COASTAL KITCHEN
CARING FOR THE COAST
SMALL-SHIP SAILING

Terms and Conditions: Prices are per person and based on 2 people sharing an Unspecified Inside cabin (The Coastal Express), a Polar Inside cabin (The North Cape Line) and a Polar Outside Cabin (The Svalbard Line). Prices do not include the additional 5% discount. Single supplements will apply. Discount is only valid on the voyage portion of the trip. Prices are subject to availability, correct at the time of printing and may increase or be withdrawn without prior notice. See website for full T&Cs. E&OE. See website for further details. Image: © Ørjan Bertelsen.

ABTA V7545

Cruise Critic Traveler THE GOLD LIST 2024

CRUISE COLLECTIVE

Join Cruise Collective for free and receive 5% OFF your next adventure

cruise-collective.com

CRUISE COLLECTIVE

Voyage into the past

Follow your passion, explore the world by sea with the best deals, discounts and inspiration from Cruise Collective

Join Cruise Collective for free today

cruise-collective.com

Q&A

Our team of experts offers tips and inspiration Edited By Claire Vaughan

Katherine Cobb is a member of AGRA based in Somerset

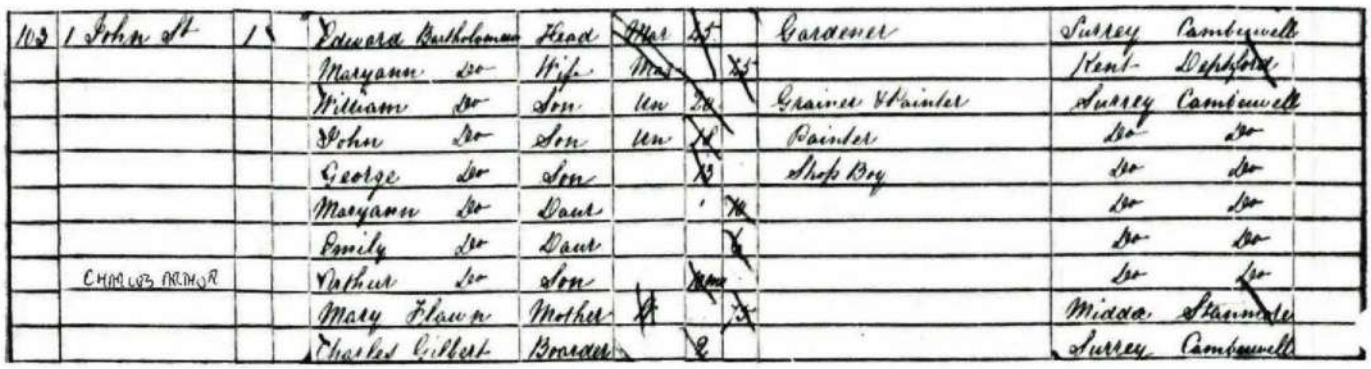
Antony Marr is a fellow, and previous chair, of AGRA and a former deputy registrar

Jayne Shrimpton is a professional dress historian and portrait specialist

Phil Tomaselli is a military family history expert and author

Claire Vaughan is a former deputy editor of *WDYTYA? Magazine*

Sarah Williams edits *WDYTYA? Magazine*



103	1 John St		1	Edward Bartholomew	Head	Mar	45		Gardener	Surrey	Camberwell
				Maryann Do	Wife	Mar		35		Kent	Deptford
				William Do	Son	Un	24		Grainer & Painter	Surrey	Camberwell
				John Do	Son	Un	18		Painter	Do	Do
				George Do	Son		13		Shop Boy	Do	Do
				Maryann Do	Dau			10		Do	Do
				Emily Do	Dau			6		Do	Do
	CHARLES ARTHUR			Arthur Do	Son			1		Do	Do
				Mary Flower	Mother	W		75		Middx	Stepney
				Charles Gilbert	Boarder		2			Surrey	Camberwell

Jeremy's great grandfather Charles Bartholomew is recorded as a boarder called Charles Gilbert in the 1861 census. Why did the Bartholomews take him in?

Why was my great grandfather living with the Bartholomew family?

Q My great grandfather is recorded as Charles Alfred Bartholomew on my grandmother's birth certificate and Charles Henry Bartholomew on those of her siblings.

I had thought that Charles' father was Edward Bartholomew. The 1861 census shows Edward with wife Mary Ann in Camberwell and records the youngest children as Arthur age 10 months and "Boarder", Charles Gilbert, aged two. The 1871 census lists Charles and Arthur both as Bartholomews.

I was told that Charles was the son of Emma Guley, who abandoned him and emigrated to Melbourne in 1861 with her four-year-old son Alfred. I share no DNA with Edward, but I do with the Guley family of Australia. Emma's son Alfred was baptised in Camberwell on 27 August 1858. Her son Charles Henry was born on 5 November 1858 in Camberwell. So it seems my great grandfather was Charles Henry Guley alias Charles Gilbert/Bartholomew.

Why was he called Charles Gilbert, and why was he with Edward's family?

Jeremy Baker

A You have several pieces of evidence, many of which give slightly different names and details. The simple question seems to be, "Is the Charles Gilbert in the 1861 census the same person as Charles Henry Bartholomew?"

The record evidence you have, and particularly the DNA connections you have in Australia to the Guley family, taken together, while not conclusive, certainly suggest that Charles Bartholomew did start life perhaps as Charles Henry, son of Emma Guley.

There's no father named on Charles Henry Guley's birth registration, but although the rules at that time would have allowed an unmarried father to be named by the mother, it's rare to find it in practice.

The use of the surname Gilbert in the 1861 census may well suggest a possible identity for his father. There's no birth registration for a child of that name in the area around that time, but a name could easily be assumed or used with no official record being shown.

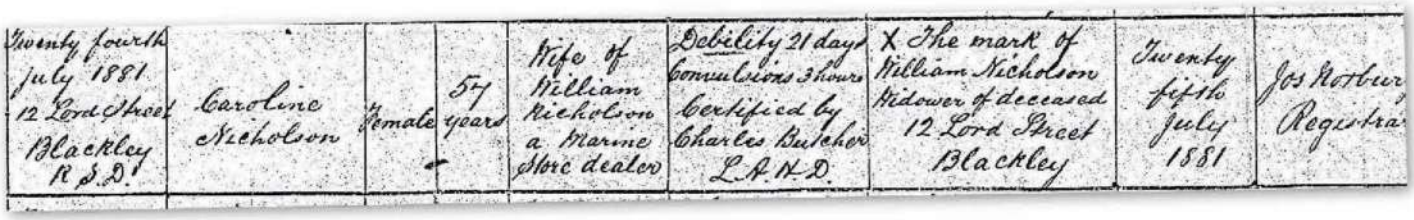
Before the 1926 Adoption of Children Act, no central record of adoptions was kept and many were arranged through charities, church societies and the like. Although some records exist, they can be hard to track down.

I'd look at why the young Charles was taken in by the Bartholomews. Start by investigating the wider family of both Edward and Mary Ann to see if there was any connection, however remote, to Emma or a family named Gilbert.

Antony Marr

HAVE YOU HIT A BRICK WALL? Please email your questions or family photographs to the following address: **wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk**

If selected, your query will be answered on these pages. Please note that we receive a large volume of correspondence each month, and cannot reply to each message individually. You are more likely to receive a response if you keep the question and background information concise (no more than 150 words), with a clear goal of enquiry.



Twenty fourth July 1881 12 Lord Street Blackley R.S.D.	Caroline Nicholson	Female	57 years	Wife of William Nicholson a Marine Store dealer	Debility 21 days Convulsions 3 hours Certified by Charles Butcher L.R.H.D.	X The mark of William Nicholson Widower of deceased 12 Lord Street Blackley	Twenty fifth July 1881	Jos Rothwell Registrar

Katherine has found this record of the July 1881 death of Caroline, wife of William Nicholson – could she be the boarder living with William Henry in 1881?

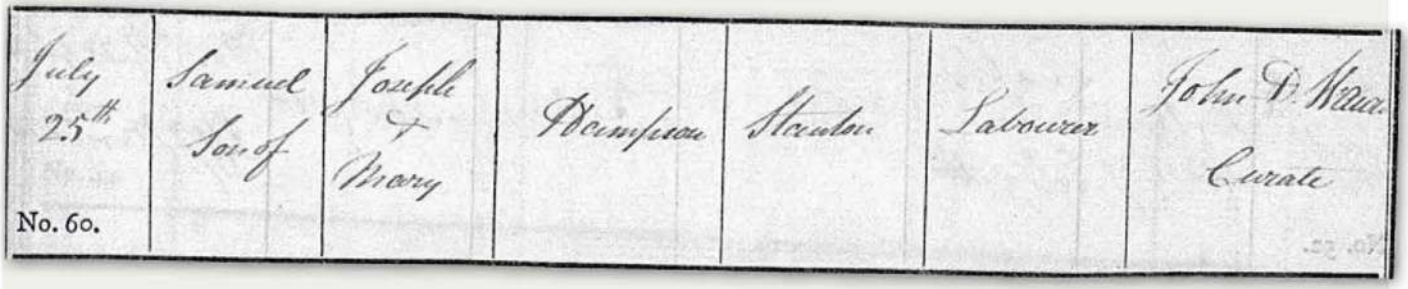
Where was William Henry Nicholson in 1871?

Q I can't find my great great grandfather, William Henry Nicholson (born 31 July 1857, Manchester), in the 1871 census. He was registered under the name Smith when he was born, as his parents, Margaret Smith (born 1833, Ireland) and William Francis Nicholson (born 1841), weren't married. In 1866, William Francis died and I can't find Margaret or William Henry in the 1871 census. By 1881, William Henry is married to Elizabeth Alice (née Pearson) and in Stretford. A Caroline Nicholson, born in Birmingham, a monthly nurse is boarding with them. Given her surname, I'm wondering if she fits into the family somewhere.
Margaret Bailey

A I, too, was unable to find William Henry in 1871. I thought a William Henry Smith, living with brothers at Hulme, might be him; but on finding the same family in 1851, it became clear that this could not be your forebear. Since William's mother had connections with Ireland, I wondered whether they might have been there when the census was taken. If living with a family with a different surname, William could be recorded under their surname and be untraceable. Although he is in several trees on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**), none has an 1871 census entry for him. A long shot would be to obtain William's marriage certificate and use the address he provided to search the census.

In 1881, Caroline Nicholson said she was married and born in Birmingham around 1824; however, I could not find her in any other census. Since no baby is listed with the family, I searched the General Register Office's site (**www.gro.gov.uk/content**) for a birth with mother's maiden name Pearson, and found a Robert Henry Nicholson registered July–September 1881. Several Ancestry trees state he was born on 4 June, but none has an image of the birth certificate. I recommend obtaining a copy to confirm date and parentage.

The only possible sighting of Caroline is the July 1881 death of Caroline, wife of William Nicholson, at Blackley, aged 57. However, I found no other mention of this couple, so could not establish whether Caroline was in some way related to William Henry.
Katherine Cobb



July 25th No. 60.	Samuel Son of	Joseph & Mary	Hampson	Stanton	Labourer	John D. Wear Curate

Sarah believes that she has smashed Arlean's brick wall with this 1817 record of the christening of Samuel Hampson, son of Joseph and Mary

Where was Samuel Hamson born?

Q I'm trying to track down a baptism record for my 3x great grandfather, Samuel Hamson. He was born in 1815 in Stanton, Derbyshire. He married in 1842 in Duffield, Derbyshire. According to the certificate, his father was Joseph Hamson (born 1783, Glossop, Derbyshire; died 1826, Milford, Derbyshire), but I haven't identified his mother yet. I've tried everywhere.
Arlean Marsh

A Details of births before the introduction of civil registration in 1837 can be tricky, because birth certificates as such were not issued. So we have to rely on parents having their children baptised, and on those records having survived.

In the case of your 3x great grandfather, you do not say how you know that he was born in Stanton in Derbyshire but luckily the records for that parish are not only online, they are freely available via FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**). Trawling through the register, it is clear that the Hamson family (often spelled "Hampson") were in the parish for generations.

In these situations, it is important that you rule out any possible duplicates. I have found a Samuel Hampson, son of Joseph and Mary Hampson, who was christened on 25 July 1817 in the parish of Stanton by Dale in Derbyshire, who I think is probably your man. His father Joseph is described as a labourer. If Joseph's occupation matches the one recorded on Samuel's marriage record then that adds credence to the theory. Other children of Joseph and Mary recorded in the parish are William Clifford (baptised 1811), Henry (baptised 1812) and Charlotte (baptised 1821).

It would also be worth seeing if you can find marriage records for Samuel's siblings that might help to build up a family picture. Were any of them recorded as witnesses at his wedding, or was he a witness at theirs?
Sarah Williams

Picture Analysis

When was this wedding photograph taken?

Q Can you date this wedding photo, which is old and quite fragile? It belonged to my husband's grandmother, Clara, but there is no identifying information on it. The bride and groom are believed to be Clara's parents, Jacob Wicks (1839–1925) and Mary Ann Whittington (1838–1917), who married on 26 December 1861.
Kathleen McNeill

A Unless carefully stored and delicately handled, all paper or card-mounted photographs can easily deteriorate. Such fragile prints don't necessarily signify extreme age; indeed such assumptions can mislead today's researchers. Rather, by considering trends in photographic history and wedding traditions, and by studying the picture clues – especially the fashion details, we can determine an accurate timeframe for this unidentified studio portrait.

In the early decades of studio photography, capturing several people together was difficult, only advancing from the late 1880s/1890s as technology improved. Wedding photography in general was also uncommon before this time. Altogether, indoor wedding scenes like this were unknown in 1861 when Jacob and Mary married. So who are these relations?

This type of studio wedding-group photo portraying bride, groom, adult attendants and juvenile flower girls is broadly typical of the late 1800s and early 1900s, while the clothing and accessories narrow the date to c1893–1899. I don't know Clara's dates, but the adults here appear youthful so presumably connect to her generation. If the wedding couple aren't Clara and her husband, perhaps they were among the attendants; or could this represent the marriage of one of their siblings?
Jayne Shrimpton

1 NECKTIES
The men wear white neckties that were popularly reserved for special occasions by the late Victorian era.

2 SMOCK DRESS
The loose white smock dress worn by the older girl was a fashion introduced in the early to mid-1890s. This suggests the date is no earlier than 1893.

3 FLOWER GIRLS
By the late 1880s/1890s weddings often included young bridesmaids and/or flower girls, often nieces of the bride/groom.

4 WEDDING DRESS
In the 1890s brides, unless affluent, usually wore a pastel-coloured fashionable dress that could be used again, sometimes pairing it with a white veil.

5 BRIDESMAIDS
Adult bridesmaids often had a fashionable pale-coloured day dress, stylish hat and posy.

6 SLEEVES
The chief fashion dating clue here is the shape of the ladies' and girls' puffed upper sleeves, in the leg-of-mutton style that dominated the 1890s.

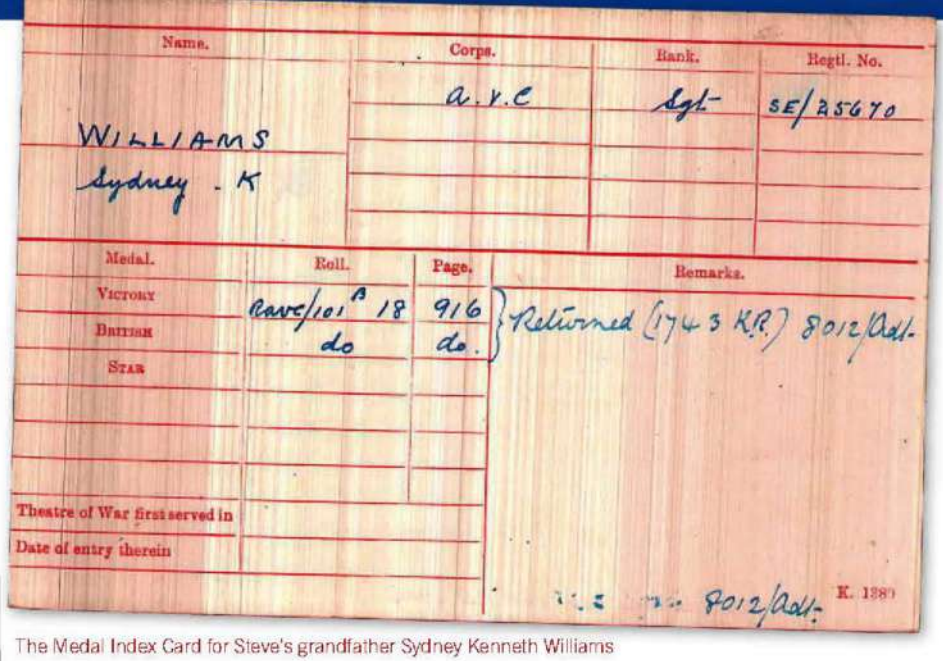
What did my jockey grandfather do in the war?

Q My grandfather, Sydney Kenneth Williams, was born on 24 July 1891 at Pembroke Dock, Wales, to John and Sarah Williams (née Keith). He worked as a jockey then became a horse trainer and served in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. I'm trying to find out what he did during the war including where he served. Can you help?
Steve Williams

A This isn't going to be easy. The only records I can find, Sydney's Medal Index Card (MIC) and the associated medal roll (both on Ancestry; **ancestry.co.uk**), give us few clues. One is his number, SE/25670. The SE indicates "Specially enlisted for the duration of the War", which might imply he was enlisted because of his knowledge of horses. I note that in the 1911 census, Sydney was an apprentice at a racing stables in Arundel. He was already a sergeant, which implies expertise, when he went to France.

The War Office book *Animal Management, 1908* runs to 370 pages, of which more than 270 relate to horses, showing how important they were to the military. The Army in France had 16 Base Veterinary Hospitals by 1918, as well as scores of smaller units (Mobile Veterinary Sections) attached to the field armies, corps and divisions. I doubt that Sydney had any veterinary experience, so I suspect he was employed at a Base Depot or a Convalescent Horse Depot, helping restore injured horses to health.

One thing I have noticed, although it would take an age to go through, is that many Veterinary Corps War Diaries list movements of other ranks, giving name, rank and number, when they join or are transferred to other units. These diaries can be found on The National Archives' website via its catalogue Discovery (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**) using 'Veterinary' as the search term in series WO 95 adding 'Depot' or 'Hospital'. Sydney didn't go to France before 1916, so you can ignore the first two years of the war. It may be possible to trace part of his service this way.
Phil Tomaselli


Name. WILLIAMS Sydney K
Corps. A.V.C
Rank. Sgt
Regtl. No. SE/25670
Medal. Victory / British / Star
Roll. Rave/101 A 18 / do
Page. 916 / do.
Remarks. Returned (1743 K.R.) 8012/Adl.
Theatre of War first served in
Date of entry therein
8012/Adl.
K. 1380

The Medal Index Card for Steve's grandfather Sydney Kenneth Williams

TOP TIP War Diaries created during the Second World War rarely mention other ranks by name and are full of acronyms making them tricky to interpret, but you can explore how to use them on our website: **tinyurl.com/wdytya-war-diaries**.

Where was Florence in 1911?

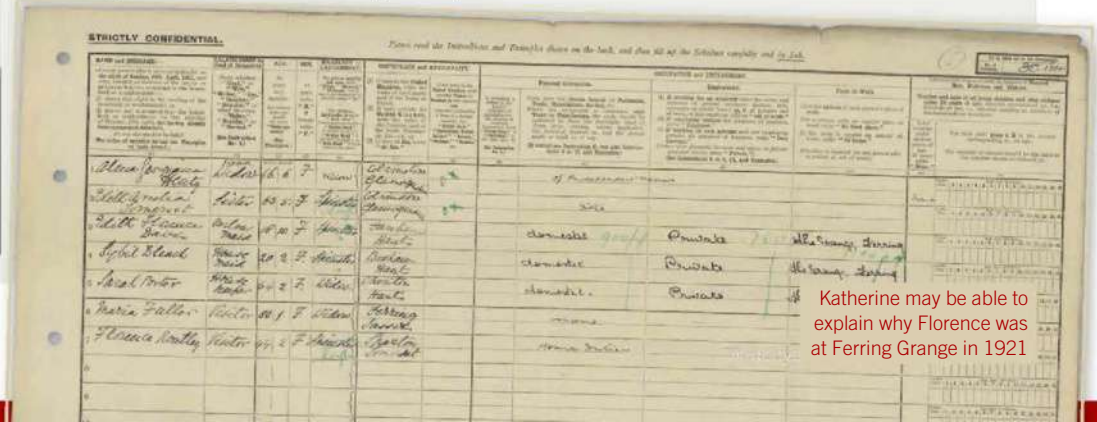
Q Florence Sarah Routley (born 1874, Spaxton, Somerset) lived with her parents in Spaxton until 1901. In the 1921 census, she's a house guest at Ferring Grange, Sussex, a very posh house. She is single, and engaged in domestic duties. Her parents are both dead. In 1926, she married Fred Burcham of Findon, Sussex, in Spaxton, and in 1939 she is working on her husband's dairy farm. Where is she in 1911 – was she a suffragette maybe, and what was she doing at Ferring Grange?
Jill Alexander

A Looking first at the 1911 census, despite using wildcards in the surname and searching for Florence (any surname), born at Spaxton, I was unable to trace her. Neither could I find her in the 1911 Scotland census nor Ireland's. As individuals were sometimes identified by initials only, a search was made for any 'FR' born in the mid-1870s. Although several were found, none could be tied in with Florence.

As for whether Florence was a suffragette, Ancestry has an index of suffragettes arrested (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61005**), while the Suffragette Collection on Findmypast comprises 78,000 records from The National Archives and other sources (**bit.ly/fmp-suff**). Her name does not appear in either. However, she could have been one of the movement's supporters who refused to participate in the 1911 census, asserting that if they did not have a vote, they would not take part in the census.

Equally Florence may have been abroad in 1911, so I checked the lists of passengers leaving the UK. There is no sign of her, but these lists only include persons going to destinations outside Europe.

Moving on to your second question, when Florence married, the groom's residence was Findon, which leads me to think that Florence remained in Sussex until the mid-1920s; if so, how did she support herself? The entry preceding Florence's is for another visitor, Maria Fuller, a widow, aged 80. Perhaps Florence was visiting Ferring Grange as Maria's companion or carer.
Katherine Cobb


STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Katherine may be able to explain why Florence was at Ferring Grange in 1921

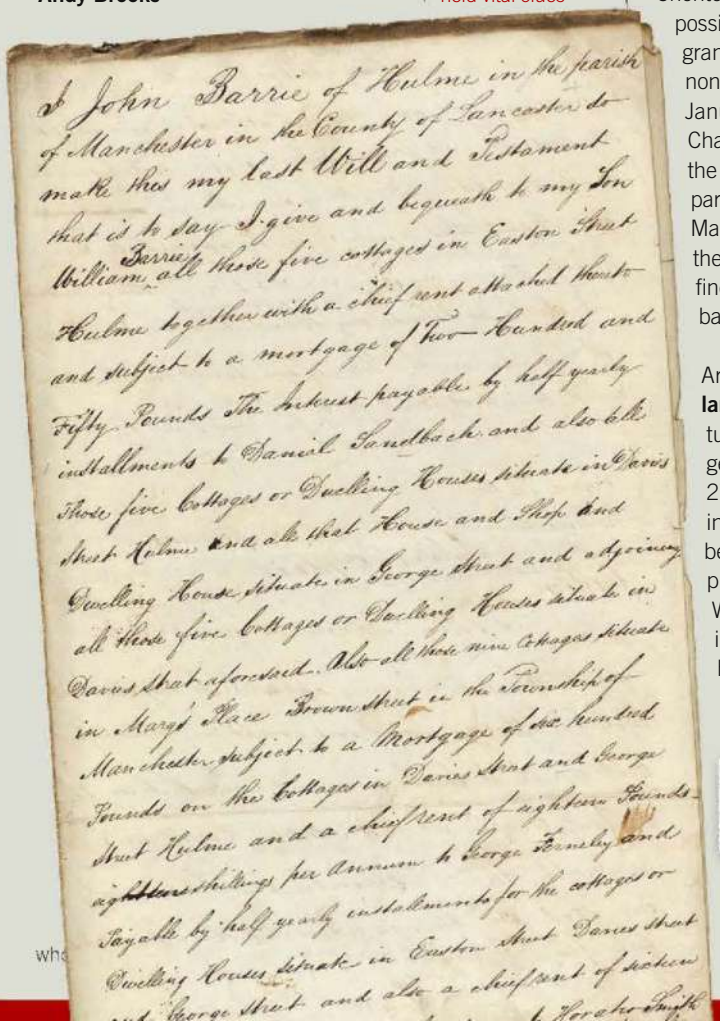
Big Question

How can I find out more about John Barrie of Hulme?

Q I've traced my Barrie line back to my 4x great grandfather, John Barrie (born c1789). The only definite sighting I have of him is in the 1841 census living at Mary's Place in Hulme, Manchester, with his son and daughter-in-law William (my 3x great grandfather via his daughter Mary Jane) and Jane Barrie. He is aged 50 and listed as a carder, and was not born in the county. I thought I'd found his death record, but that John Barrie was a "gentleman". Can you help me uncover anything about my John?
Andy Brooks

ANDY BROOKS got in touch because he was struggling to research his 4x great grandfather

Claire tracked down John Barrie's will from 1846, which held vital clues


I John Barrie of Hulme in the parish
of Manchester in the County of Lancaster do
make this my last Will and Testament
that is to say I give and bequeath to my Son
William Barrie all those five cottages in Easton Street
Hulme together with a chief rent attached thereto
and subject to a mortgage of Two Hundred and
Fifty Pounds The Interest payable by half yearly
installments to Daniel Sandbach and also all
those five Cottages or Dwelling Houses situate in Davies
Street Hulme and all that House and Shop and
Dwelling House situate in George Street and adjoining
all those five Cottages or Dwelling Houses situate in
Davies Street aforesaid. Also all those nine Cottages situate
in Mary's Place Brown Street in the Township of
Manchester subject to a Mortgage of one hundred
Pounds on the Cottages in Davies Street and George
Street Hulme and a chief rent of eighteen Pounds
eighteen shillings per Annum to George Tomlay and
payable by half yearly installments for the cottages or
Dwelling Houses situate in Easton Street Davies Street
and George Street and also a chief rent of sixteen

A Sometimes the solution to a query is hidden in plain sight, which is why it's important to interrogate every bit of evidence and not discount anything too early. The death record you found shows John Barrie, gentleman, died on 25 December 1845 at 34 George Street, Hulme, aged 56. The informant was William Barrie. At least four of those five pieces of information would fit with what you know about your 4x great grandfather. Luckily, I found an old photograph of 34 George Street on the Manchester Local Image Collection website (**images.manchester.gov.uk**) – it's a large red-brick house over three floors, with what would have been a shop below – but it's clearly nowhere near grand enough for what we might think of as a gentleman's residence. Add to this his cause of death – consumption – and it suggests that he wasn't living the life of a man with wealth.

I found this John on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) in the collection 'UK, Records of the Removal of Graves and Tombstones, 1601–2007'. He and his wife Mary (who died in 1825) had been interred at Rusholme Road Cemetery, a dissenters' cemetery in nearby Chorlton-on-Medlock. There's also a possible baptism for your 3x great grandfather, William, in Ancestry's nonconformist collection on 29 January 1815 at the Independent Chapel on Grosvenor Street in the Piccadilly area of the city. His parents are John, a carder, and Mary Barry. William is listed as the couple's third child, but I can find no other children for them baptised at this chapel.

A search of Lancashire Archives' catalogue (**archivecat.lancashire.gov.uk/calmview**) turned up a will for John Barrie, gentleman of Hulme, dated 27 January 1846. It made interesting reading. John Barrie bequeathed several mortgaged properties in Hulme to his son, William, including five cottages in Easton Street, five dwelling houses in Davies Street, a house and shop in George Street (presumably number

34 George Street in Hulme, where John Barrie was living on the date that he died

34) – and, crucially, Mary's Place, where your John Barrie was living in 1841. And at the end of the will he bequeaths his portrait and frame to his granddaughter Mary Jane Barrie, your great grandmother.

In the mid-19th century, Hulme was a community of small back-to-backs that had been built to house the expanding working population of Manchester – often in slum conditions – many of whom had fled hard times in Ireland. With mortgages on all his properties, John seems to have had a business collecting rent from tenants, perhaps elevating him to the status of 'gentleman'– at least in the eyes of his son William, the informant at his death.

John's house ownership also sees him listed in the electoral rolls on Ancestry from at least 1832 (the date the collection starts). From 1836, William Barrie and another John Barrie, presumably John's sons, also appear in the electoral rolls, the three of them living at 79 St James Street. John junior disappears after this. I searched the burial records and found a John Barry (bricklayer) who died in the fever ward (no hospital name given) and was buried on 29 June 1838, aged 21. Against his name was marked "RC" – was he a Roman Catholic? I'm wondering whether this detail and the facts that his father was buried in a dissenters' burial ground and his brother was baptised in a nonconformist church may mean that the family came from Ireland.
Claire Vaughan

270	Twenty fifth December 1845	John Barrie	Widow	56 years	Gentleman	Consumption 12 months no medical attendance	William Barrie Present at the Death 34 George Street	Twenty sixth December 1845	William Gray Registrar

The record of John Barrie's death at 34 George Street in 1845

Was Percy 'Pip' Wilson in the RAF?

Q These images are of my great aunt's husband Percy 'Pip' Wilson, born on 10 February 1893 in Lancashire. I think he served in the Royal Air Force, but can't find any further information. Can you identify the uniform?
Sharon Kelley

A These photographs show an RAF officer, awarded the Military Cross in the First World War, who also served in the Second World War. RAF officer records from the First World War are on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), but none of them fits Percy. This usually means that he served in the Second World War as well.

The officer in the left-hand photograph wears the Military Cross ribbon, and his cap is from 1918. I suggest he's mentioned in the *London Gazette* on 16 September 1918: "Lt (Temp Captain) Percy Wilson RAF. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in destroying six enemy aeroplanes and driving down three more out of control. He also destroyed an enemy balloon, which fell in flames." The actual events took place earlier in 1918 when the *Birkenhead Express* (22 June) said he'd been awarded the Military Cross, the *Croix de Guerre* (French) and the Italian Cross. It mentioned he'd enlisted in the Army in October 1914, spent time as a motorcyclist before joining the Royal Flying Corps, and was commissioned into the RAF.

The older officer in the second photo is also clearly Percy, as his medals match (with additions). I know of many First World War officers who rejoined the RAF in 1939/1940, doing administrative jobs to free up younger men for active service.

If you're unsure, you can always apply for Percy's service record via **www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-records-of-service/apply-for-the-records-of-a-deceased-serviceperson**.
Phil Tomaselli

1 CAP

This is an RAF cap, issued in 1918, with four laurel leaves, eagle above and crown on top. The two bars either side show that he's a captain.

2 MEDALS

The medal ribbons on his chest are *(left to right)* Military Cross, 1914 (or the 1914–15 Star), *Croix de Guerre* and Italian War Merit Cross. British medals always precede foreign awards and the 1914–15 Star was awarded in 1918, so might be worn then or just after the war. A Captain Percy Wright served in Germany in 1919 with 79 Squadron.

3 CUFF RING

A single narrow ring on the cuff indicates a pilot officer (lowest officer rank).

4 MEDALS

The medal ribbons that the older Percy is wearing match the ones in the earlier photo, but two have been inserted (the British War Medal and Victory Medal – both awarded in the 1920s) and one foreign medal has been moved beneath.

5 CUFF RINGS

A double ring means that he's a flight lieutenant. Percy is obviously in charge, so he's probably a squadron leader.

A Stitch In Time

Rosemary Collins talks to a genealogy group who have researched a piece of embroidery

Sally Gardiner with Mark and David Epitaux Bird, descendants of Albert Epitaux. Inset: the sampler that the group researched

SURREY HISTORY CENTRE

Hand-sewing a sampler of embroidery, often incorporating the stitcher's name, the date and a religious message, was a common exercise for young girls in the Victorian age. Many of us today have inherited a sampler from a distant ancestor. But who were the girls who sewed these samplers, and what happened to them? One group of family historians decided to find out.

The Woking Area u3a Genealogy Group is part of the University of the Third Age movement for retired people. In 2023 the leader of the group, Sally Gardiner, had the idea of a project researching the story behind a particular sampler.

"I'd got a sampler of my grandmother's," Sally explains, "and I found out a lot as a result of that. I had it in the back of my mind for quite a while that it would be a good idea to purchase a sampler and then research the family of the sewer, and try to find living descendants."

The group were able to track down two of Ann's living relatives

Sally spotted a sampler on sale at a local auction house. It bore the message, "Let children that would fear the Lord/Hear what their teachers say/With reverence meet their parents word/And with delight obey/Ann Elizabeth Epitaux Aged 9 years 1853."

The good condition of the sampler, Ann's unusual surname and the clear date made Sally think that it would be possible to trace her family. She purchased the sampler, and the group began their research.

In the 1851 census, they found Ann living at 3 Pall Mall, Westminster, Central London, with her family. From there, they were able to trace a full family history. Ann's father George Epitaux was born in Chavannes, Switzerland, in 1811. He emigrated to Britain in 1837 and married Ann's mother, Elizabeth Jones, in 1843.

Ann was the eldest of the couple's eight children, born the following year. George ran a café from the same Pall Mall address as the family home. It later became Epitaux's Restaurant.

Ann married John Bolingbroke in 1873, and their daughter Louise was born in 1874. Sadly, John died in 1878, and Ann's life began to go downhill. In the 1881 census she is separated from her daughter and working as a barmaid at the Half Moon Hotel in Southwark. In 1882 she gave birth to twins, Annie and Charles, by an unknown father, but they both died within months. In 1883 she gave birth to another illegitimate son, also named Charles, who died in infancy as well.

In 1893 Ann died in the infirmary of St Saviour's Union Workhouse in Southwark. Her one surviving child, Louise, married Henry Sharp in 1900, but she died childless in 1906, marking the end of Ann's line.

However, the members of the group were also able to uncover the fascinating stories of Ann's siblings. Two of them, Hannah and Henry, became actors. Henry even performed with legendary actor–manager Henry Irving using the stage name Fred Epitaux.

In November the group presented their work at the Surrey History Centre in Woking (**surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre**), and launched an exhibition about their findings. They were able to track down two of Ann's living relatives, both great grandsons of her brother Albert, who attended the event and were given personalised family trees. One of them has a daughter, who will be taking custody of the sampler following the closure of the exhibition a week before Christmas.

"We are ecstatic," Sally says. "We were hopeful that the research was going to be interesting, and so it proved. Everybody was so excited when they found different things."

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your local history project with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *rosemary.collins@ourmedia.co.uk*

Discover More

Woking Area u3a Genealogy

w **wokingareau3a.co.uk/u3a_groups/genealogy/**

The group meets monthly at Goldwater Lodge in Goldwater Park, Woking, Surrey. There are other u3a Genealogy Groups around the country – for details, visit **u3a.org.uk/get-involved/find-your-local-u3a**.

CRUISE COLLECTIVE

Celebrity Cruises®

Departure date
AUG 21
2025

FLASH SALE

Ocean View was ~~£945~~ **£709pp**

Infinite Veranda was ~~£1,021~~ **£849pp**

was ~~£1,261~~ **£899pp**

Prices include gratuities. Single supplement applies.

Explore Europe in Style: 4-Night Rotterdam & Bruges Cruise from Southampton with Celebrity Cruises

Set sail on an unforgettable 4-night cruise from Southampton, exploring the charming cities of Rotterdam and Bruges. Discover world-class dining, exceptional service, and stunning views aboard Celebrity Cruises, where every detail is designed to elevate your journey. Book with Cruise Collective to enjoy exclusive access to the best prices.

YOUR ITINERARY WITH CELEBRITY APEX

Day 1: Southampton, England
Southampton is a historic port city on England's southern coast, offering rich WWII history, vibrant shopping, and exquisite dining options, all while serving as a gateway to nearby attractions like London, the Isle of Wight, and Windsor Castle.

Day 2: At Sea - Cruising
While at sea, take the time to recharge before the next adventure. Lounge by the pool, be spoiled at the spa, taste the fine gourmet delicacies or explore the venues on-board until we arrive at the next amazing destination.

Day 3: Rotterdam, Netherlands
Once a humble 13th-century fishing village, Europe's largest port city is now a buzzing multicultural metropolis, known for its stunning views from the Euromast tower, striking architecture, and world-class museums including the Boijmans and the Kunsthal.

Day 4: Bruges, Belgium
Bruges seamlessly blends medieval charm with exciting culture. Here you can wander through the cobblestone streets, historic churches, art history, and enjoy culinary delights like Belgian waffles and chocolate. Also discover nearby Ghent which boasts scenic canals and fascinating landmarks.

Day 5: Southampton, England
On day 5, your voyage comes to an end and you will return to Southampton with truly unforgettable memories.

"Cruising with Celebrity felt like stepping into a world where every detail was crafted with intention. We felt genuinely pampered by the crew, it wasn't just a trip; it was a truly memorable escape."

Paul M – Inverness

Scan the QR code to redeem your exclusive member offer from Cruise Collective

Join Cruise Collective for free today
cruise-collective.com

Heath Robinson's creation 'The Gadgets' from 1934 resembled a giant doll's house

DEBORAH SUGG RYAN

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

The Ideal Home Show has revealed and predicted trends since 1908, says **Deborah Sugg Ryan**

The 100th Ideal Home Show takes place this year, and from its beginning the event has been a major influence on the public's taste in all matters that make a house a home. It has not just been an exhibition of the latest labour-saving homes and appliances, but also has entertained and educated its audience with nostalgic features and exciting forecasts of the future. Founded by the newspaper the *Daily Mail* in 1908, it was originally named the Ideal Home Exhibition. The show proved to be immensely popular as home ownership grew rapidly in the interwar years, from 10 per cent in 1908 to 32 per cent in 1939. Originally held in alternate years at London's Olympia, the exhibition became an annual event from 1923, interrupted only by the world wars and their aftermath and later Covid-19.

DEBORAH SUGG RYAN is professor emerita of design history at the University of Portsmouth, and author of *Ideal Homes: Uncovering the Design and History of the Interwar Home* (Manchester University Press, 2020)

The idea of the labour-saving home has always been of the utmost importance to the event. In the 1920s it addressed the 'servant problem', a concern about the availability and affordability of paid domestic help, which was already identified before the First World War but gathered pace afterwards when women were reluctant to return to gruelling live-in domestic-service positions after war work. Mechanical and electrical appliances were demonstrated at the exhibition as servants that could be operated by the modern housewife. Although washing machines, refrigerators and dishwashers were available, the most popular appliance in Britain was the electric iron. Expense and the lack of a standardised electricity supply – numerous ▶

alternating-current and direct-current systems were used until the late 1930s, even in the same towns – hampered the adoption of electrical appliances, because they might become obsolete if their owners moved even a few streets away. Moreover, if households had a surplus budget, they were more likely to spend it on an appliance to aid leisure, such as a radiogram, rather than one to save women's labour.

Women's desires for a labour-saving home were showcased in the exhibition's 1930 competition for 'The House That Jill Built'. The winning design of Phyllis Lee, a housewife with no training in architecture, was realised as a brick-built house with a flat roof, a semi-open-plan arrangement with a kitchen featuring cabinets boasting doors with no mouldings and untarnishable latches and handles, and a dining nook with built-in furniture. The kitchen had a refrigerator, a rarity in British homes with only 2 per cent having one in 1948, 15 per cent in 1959 and 58 per cent in 1970. More consequential was its gas cooker, which along with the electric cooker did more to revolutionise the home than any other appliance.

When Gadgets Go Too Far

In 1934, the commercial culture of labour-saving in suburban homes that the exhibition had helped to create was sufficiently established to be mocked. A house named 'The Gadgets', in the Tudorbethan style – a subset of Tudor Revival architecture – and designed by the cartoonist Heath Robinson, stood nearly 20 feet tall and was peopled by more than 20 moving figures, and featured an open front like a doll's house so that visitors could see inside. All of the rooms were fitted with a variety of moving labour-saving gadgets, including trapdoors in the bedroom that lowered residents into the kitchen for breakfast. Robinson relished the opportunity to see visitors' reactions to his house, although not everyone got the joke – somebody even condemned his creation as "impracticable".

1 The General Electric Company's stand from 1928 – note the assistant wearing a dress depicting an electric light. By the late 1930s two-thirds of British homes were lit by electricity

2 The 'Nurseries of the Nations' display of 1930 predicted an ultra-hygienic nursery from 1960, controlled by a mother from her administrative chair

3 In 1928 the 'House of the Future' display predicted that its residents would travel by aero-car in the year 2000

In 1928 the first 'House of the Future' to appear at the Ideal Home Exhibition was designed by S Rowland Pierce and RA Duncan, imagining life in the year 2000. The house combined the emerging modernist International Style in architecture for the exterior with ideas about the impact of colour on the emotions in the interior and efficiency style in the kitchen, and presented a fantasy of domestic life where everyday household tasks would be automated and simplified with electric servants, aero-cars and even a wireless international communication device.

Visions of the future were a recurrent theme in displays of room sets throughout the ages and from different countries. A display of 'Nurseries of the Nations' in 1930 included a

GETTY IMAGES

4 This photograph of actor Diana Rigg, who played Emma Peel in the TV series *The Avengers*, was taken on 6 March 1967 in the 'Cook'n Dining Room' of the exhibition's Electric Pavilion, which occupied 14,500 square feet and showcased a range of electrical gadgets across eight sections focused on heating, cooking, refrigeration, dishwashing, cleaning and laundering, water heating, lighting and general appliances

5 Alison and Peter Smithson's 1956 'House of the Future' predicted life in the 1980s

6 In 1934 'The Gadgets', complete with moving figures, depicted the ultimate labour-saving home to comic effect

forecast of the nursery of 1960. The display imagined an ultra-hygienic environment, made possible by new technologies and materials, that took full advantage of the health-giving properties of fresh air and sunlight. The ceiling could slide back to admit fresh air, and the cot had a canopy to shield the baby's eyes from bright lights. The nursery would be so simple that mother could take charge from her administrative chair, with no nurse required. Discipline would be administered through a 'black rod' chair for the bad child and a gold chair for the good one.

The Far Future Of 1980

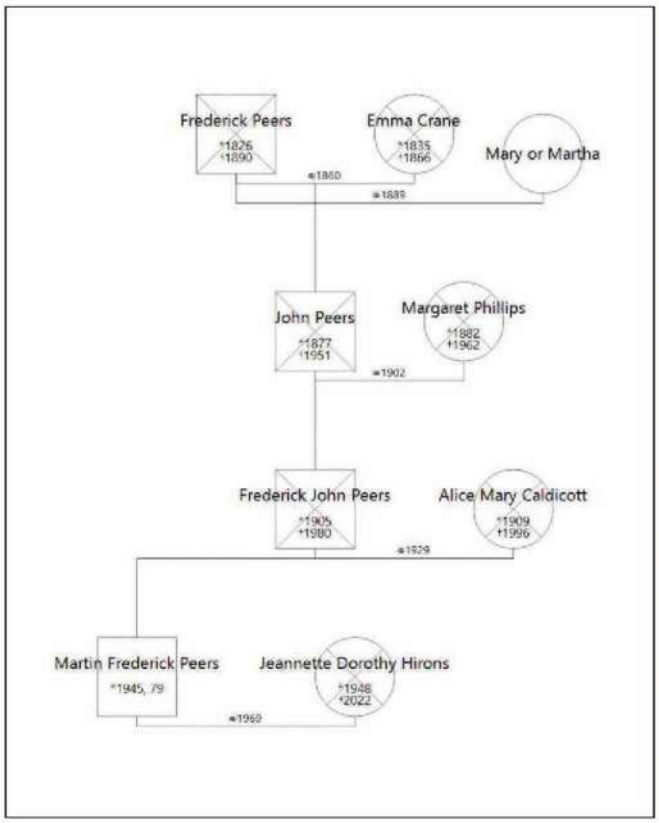
The 'House of the Future' became a popular display throughout the exhibition's history, the most celebrated of which was 1956's vision for the home of 1980 by radical young architects Alison and Peter Smithson, pioneers of the Brutalist movement. Their creation would operate as a machine, virtually eliminating the need for housework. Moulded out of plastic-impregnated plaster, the house had a skin structure built up in units, comprising floor, walls and ceiling as a continuous surface. The rooms flowed into each other like caves and each compartment was different in size, shape and height according its particular purpose.

The house's features were demonstrated by a couple wearing striking nylon casual clothes. From the electric folding front door, the visitor passed through a curtain of warm air to remove dust. The living room was devoid of furniture except for a few chairs, but on pressing a button a section of the floor rose up to form a coffee table or dining table. The kitchen's fitments were at eye level, and built into the walls. The bathroom contained a shower that both washed and dried, plus a sunken bath that filled from the bottom at a temperature that was controlled by a thermostat. The bedroom only contained a bed with a nylon sheet (the house's controlled heating meant that no other bedclothes were required), and all of the clothes were stored in the dressing room next door.

Much of the focus of the Ideal Home Show has been on the kitchen, the room that has been most subject to changes in design and technology in our homes. The Electric Pavilion at 1967's event featured an open-plan 'Cook'n Dining Room' with clean lines and built-in appliances that would not look out of place in our homes today. On the counter sat the iconic Kenwood Chef kitchen machine. Launched at the exhibition in 1950, the food mixer is renowned for its longevity and usefulness – unlike many of the gadgets demonstrated at the show that after being used a few times were relegated to the back of the kitchen drawer.

• This year's exhibition takes place at Olympia London between 21 March and 6 April. For details visit **idealhomeshow.co.uk**.

GETTY IMAGES / DEBORAH SUGG RYAN



Create a genogram of your tree for free

Nick Peers reveals how to build genograms in minutes using free software for Windows PCs

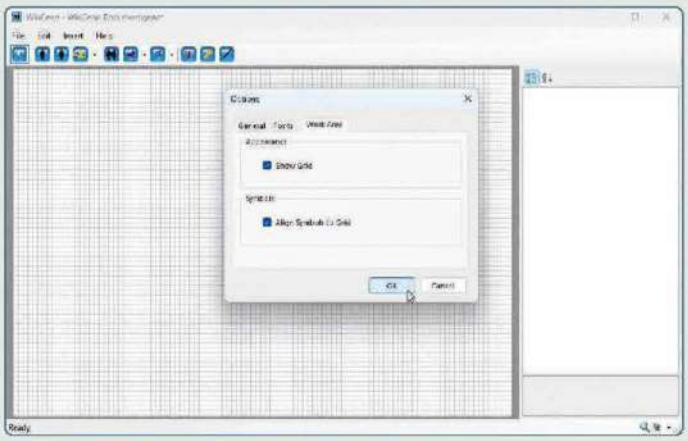
Genograms provide a pictorial view of your tree using a series of symbols to reveal patterns and other hereditary traits. If you've never come across them before, Wikipedia (**en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genogram**) has a detailed description and a chart explaining the basic symbols.

Drawing one from scratch can be a daunting task, which is where WinGeno comes into play. This free app supplies the building blocks for simple genograms illustrating all of the basic relationships in your tree, giving you a gentle introduction to the topic. You can also customise them with text boxes, additional lines and even free-form shapes.

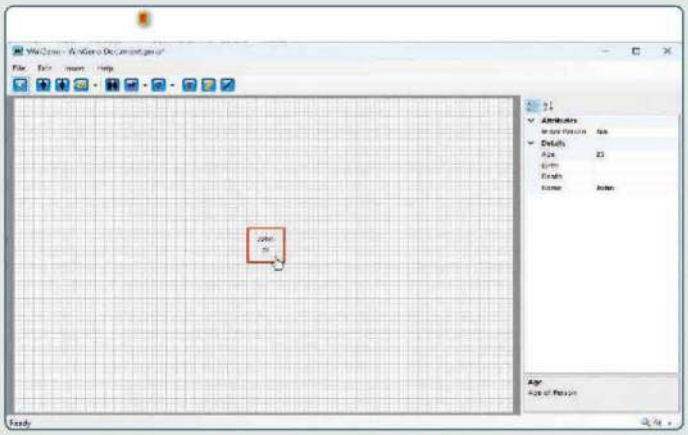
Visit the project's homepage at **wingeno.org** to get started. If you see a warning about ad-blocking, you'll need to disable the ad blocker in your browser then refresh the web page to proceed. Alternatively you can download the program directly from **wingeno.org/WinGenoSetup.exe**. Once done, double-click the EXE file and follow the prompts to install the software. Click 'Exit' when finished, and you're ready to follow our guide to constructing your first genogram.

TOP TIP!

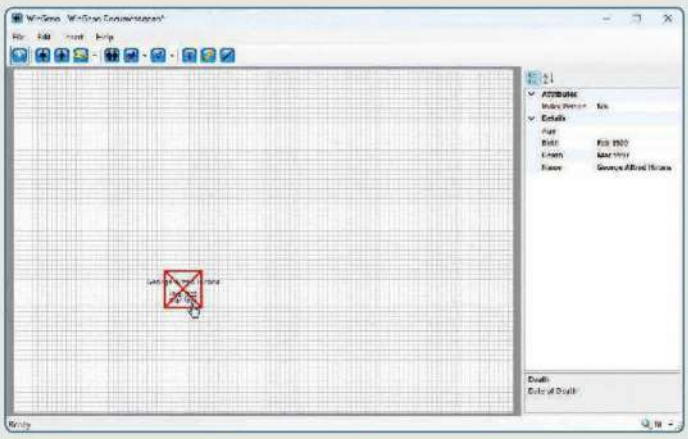
Although WinGeno was originally developed for Windows, it will work on Linux and Macs as well with restrictions. See the website for installation instructions.



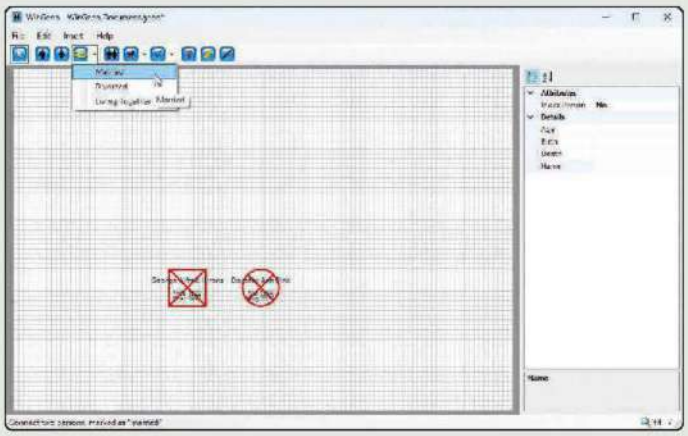
1 Set Up Your Work Area When you open WinGeno you'll see a graph-paper-like grid. This make it easy to align the various shapes on the page, which snap to the grid lines automatically. To change this behaviour or hide the grid if the lines are distracting, choose 'Help > Options' and switch to the 'Work Area' tab.



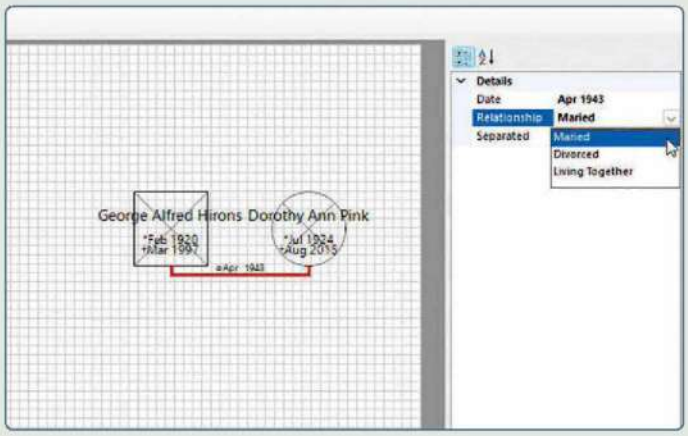
2 Add Your First Relation Let's start by adding the first person to your tree. WinGeno only supports binary genders, so click the Male or Female icon below the 'Edit' button. Move your cursor to a point on the grid and click. A square (male) or circle (female) will appear with the name John or Jane, and the default age 25.



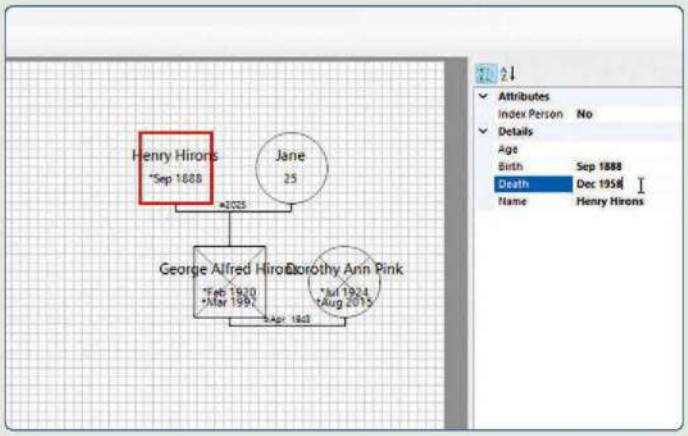
3 Edit Personal Details Each entry can display the following: name, age, birthdate and date of death (day, month and year). These are shown in the right-hand panel – click one to edit it. If you add a death date, an X appears inside the shape to indicate they're deceased. You can click-and-drag to move the shape around the grid.



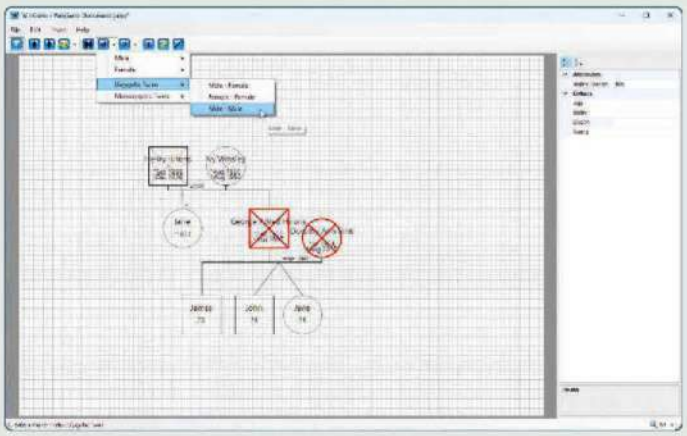
4 Add Another Person Repeat the previous two steps to add a spouse. Once done, drag their symbol close to their partner, then hold Ctrl as you click each one so both are highlighted in red. Set their relationship status – married, divorced or living together – by clicking the down arrow next to the interlinked rings icon.



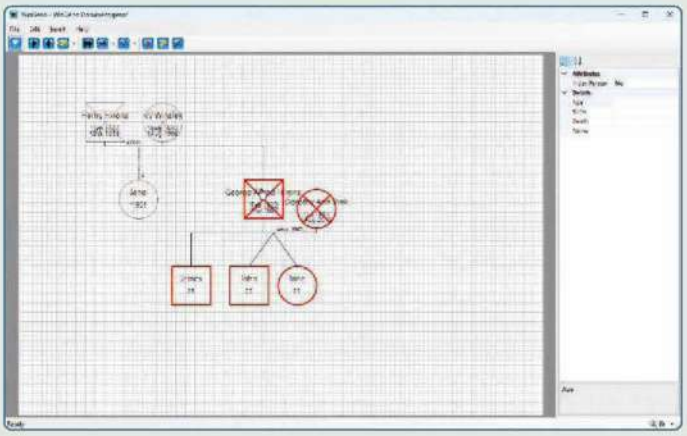
5 Confirm The Relationship A line will appear connecting the two people – it's solid for married, has a double strike-through if they're divorced, and dotted if they're living together. Use the 'Details' panel on the right to provide a date, change the relationship's status and set a separated status (single strike-through) if applicable.



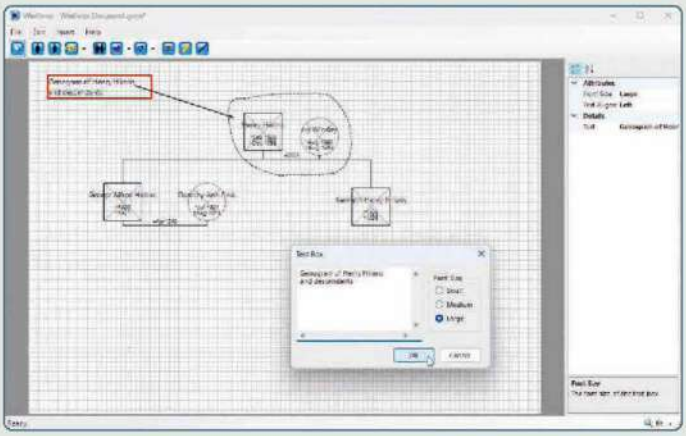
6 Add Parents Select a person and click the 'Parents' button to immediately create a set of parents for them, complete with a marriage line. You'll need to fill in their details in the same way that you filled in your original couple's – click each one in turn to do so, then click on the marriage line as before.



7 Add Children The process is similar for children – just make sure that you select both parents first. Here you have a broader choice. You can specify biological, adopted and foster children, add sets of identical (monozygotic) or non-identical (dizygotic) twins, and even record details of unborn children too.



8 Move People Around You can move your relations around the screen by clicking-and-dragging them to their new location. Existing connecting lines will adapt as required to keep the connection intact. You can also reposition shapes in groups – just hold Shift as you click each one to select it, then drag them as one.



9 Print Your Genogram You can add text boxes, straight lines (with or without arrow heads) and even freehand shapes, and choose 'File > Print Preview' to see how your finished genogram will look. When you're ready, print your genogram ('File > Print') or export it as an image ('File > Export').

BE SURPR
U COULD
ESE CERMS

EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA

Caroline Roope reveals the origins of our Easter customs, some of which are stranger than others

Easter is a sort of annual half-way house to the entire working classes, and not a small portion of the middle-class population of our metropolis, in their journey through life," a journalist for the newspaper *The Planet* argued in April 1840. "No sooner are the Christmas festivities forgotten, than the amusements of Easter appear in the horizon."

After the Christmas decorations are safely ensconced in the attic once again, and we've braved the long nights and chilly days of a British winter, Easter arrives with the promise of better weather, cute baby animals, and a long weekend of feasting and general merriment that dates back to the earliest days of Christianity.

At its heart, Easter is a festival that celebrates the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. But before Christianity came to Britain with the Romans, a similar springtime festival of feasting and worship was celebrated by resident Celtic tribes. Many of the central Easter customs are variations of these celebrations marking the changing season, cycles of nature, rebirth and fertility. The monk and scholar the Venerable Bede ▶

(672–735) believed that the name Easter originated from an Anglo-Saxon goddess named Ēostre. In turn, this led many 19th-century scholars to connect Bede's Ēostre with Germanic Easter traditions involving hares and eggs, although historical evidence is sparse. As one early 20th-century writer commented, the monk's musings on the subject were "all very romantic and beautiful", but "originated nowhere but in the brain of the venerable Bede".

Beloved Rituals

What can be verified by historical records are the numerous references to Easter rituals, both secular and religious, that our ancestors enjoyed. In medieval England, churches held dramatic religious ceremonies and processions – as well as vigils and passion plays performed by city guilds in larger medieval cities such as York and Chester. A late 14th-century manuscript in the archives of Balliol College at the University of Oxford includes a Good Friday sermon that references a passion play and the significance of the characters. From the 18th century, parts of northern England such as Lancashire and West Yorkshire developed the tradition of Pace Egg plays, after the Latin name for Easter, *Pascha*. These traditional masked mumming plays were inspired by medieval mystery plays, and are still performed today. In 1932, the West Yorkshire village of Midgley, near Halifax, revived the tradition with boys from the local school performing in "gaudy but picturesque costumes". According to the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, the production "attracted widespread attention, and a crowd of people assembled from far and near".

Children wearing Pace Egg costumes photographed in Yorkshire between the world wars

Easter also offered a chance for feasting and celebration. Besides needing very little encouragement to indulge in baked goods, sports and other acts of whimsy, our forebears were also keen to make up for their abstinence on all the aforementioned activities – as well as meat, eggs and dairy – during the 40 days of Lent. Decorating eggs and gifting them was just one of the ways our relations marked the end of Lent and the start of Easter. According to Edward I's Wardrobe and Household Accounts for 1290, held by The National Archives at Kew (**nationalarchives.gov.uk**), the king purchased more than 400 eggs for 18 pence, which were then decorated with gold leaf and given to his family and household staff.

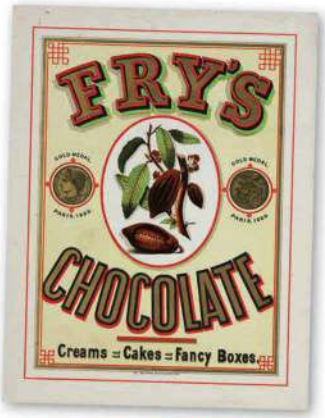
The hollow chocolate eggs we enjoy today first went on sale in 1873, thanks to JS Fry & Sons (see the box). The company merged with Cadbury in the early 20th century, and the brand became the chocolate egg of choice for an Easter treat. Around the same time, hiding painted eggs for children to find became a popular pastime for families celebrating Easter. In 1843, Queen Victoria describes in her journal how 'Pussy' (Victoria, the Princess Royal) and Bertie (Albert Edward, the future Edward VII) enjoyed an egg hunt thanks to Prince Albert

Fry's

The fascinating story of the firm that produced the UK's first chocolate Easter eggs

JS Fry & Sons, better known as Fry's, was founded by a Quaker, Joseph Fry (1728–1787), in Bristol in 1761. The company grew rapidly in the 19th century, making use of innovations such as the introduction of a Watt's steam engine to aid its manufacturing processes, as well as experimenting with recipes and developing moulded confectionery.

In 1847, Fry's created the first solid chocolate bar, followed by the first mass-produced bar, Fry's Chocolate Cream, in 1866. Over the following decades the firm continued to innovate, launching more than 220 products including the UK's first chocolate Easter egg in 1873. A newspaper advert from 1931 describes Fry's "plain chocolate eggs, milk chocolate eggs, gaily ribboned eggs filled with confectionery, eggs with wristlet watches and necklaces, eggs in vases, and last but not least, eggs filled with delicious cream, the making of which has been Fry's secret for sixty years past". Fry's Turkish Delight followed in 1914.



Cocoa pods take centre stage in a Fry's advert from c1890

Fry's was one of the biggest confectionery manufacturers in Britain during the 19th and 20th centuries, and its main rivals Cadbury and Rowntree's were also owned by Quaker families. The firm became part of Cadbury in 1919, but still traded under the name Fry's until the late 20th century.

GETTY IMAGES

who "hid some coloured easter eggs in moss, on the floor, for the 2 Children, according to the good old German custom".

Papier-mâché or satin-covered cardboard eggs were also given to children or used as decorative items in the Victorian era. Our 19th-century forebears also gifted us the tradition of egg-rolling, particularly in northern counties of England – the most famous of which takes place at Avenham Park, Preston, in Lancashire. Originally the event involved rolling decorated hard-boiled eggs, called 'pace-eggs', down grassy hills to see who could get theirs the furthest without it breaking. A reporter for the *Liverpool Mercury* attended the first event in 1867 and observed how "Thousands of eggs were rolled in every direction, children were everywhere laughing and capering in infantile pleasure… altogether the scene was one of the strangest and yet most thoroughly happy and enjoyable that I have seen for years."

Egg-rolling is still enjoyed in several locations around Britain, such as Bunkers Hill in Derby and Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, although chocolate eggs are now a more popular choice than the hard-boiled version.

Monday Merriment

Despite the best efforts of the Puritans, who in 1647 abolished some of the 'merrier' Easter celebrations such as public fairs, sports, dancing and feasting, pre-Reformation Easter activities were re-established under the 'merry monarch' Charles II in 1660. Archery, hunting, ball games and horseracing were all popular sports to participate in, or spectate – normally from Easter Monday onwards, once the serious, religious message of Easter had been communicated. "Easter Monday, that celebrated festival – that annual day of frolic and fun for the aged and the young – was ushered in yesterday," announced the *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser* in an 1822 report about the Epping Hunt, which happened every Easter in the Essex countryside. First established during the reign of Henry III in 1226, the hunt was a popular spectacle. Only the monarch was allowed to hunt in the Royal Forest of Epping, but every Easter Monday local people were given the freedom to hunt for just one day – which led to a fairly riotous affair, as hundreds of city-dwellers descended on the area to try their luck on horseback. "In no portion of Easter Monday's amusements is this pleasure of being dislodged from the saddle more prevalent," wrote the *Public Ledger*.

The hunt fell out of favour and was considered vulgar by the upper classes, leading to its eventual ban in 1847.

Another Easter staple was the Easter fair. One of the most notorious was Greenwich in South-East London, where games, dancing and 'tumbling' took place. This involved couples running and then falling down Observatory Hill, often suffering broken limbs or head injuries. But there were also more sedate activities, such as picnicking, food stalls and fairground rides. "The road to Greenwich during the whole of Easter Monday, is in a state of perpetual bustle and noise," Charles Dickens wrote in *Sketches by Boz* (1836). "Imagine yourself in an extremely dense crowd, which swings you to and fro, and in and out, and every way but the right one; add to this the ▶

The Easter Hunt at Epping Forest, c1810

The cross on hot cross buns is inspired by Jesus' crucifixion

GETTY IMAGES

The cutting of the hare pie in Hallaton on 5 April 1920 is watched by two men holding the kegs for the 'bottle kicking' competition

screams of women, the shouts of boys, the clanging of gongs, the firing of pistols, the ringing of bells… and you are in the very centre and heart of the fair."

Drinking and dancing went on well into the night, and rowdy scenes were common. By 1857 the ranger of the park Lord Haddo had had enough of the after-hours pickpocketing, gambling and drunken behaviour, and the courts eventually ordered the fair to close on the grounds that it didn't have a charter and was therefore illegal.

Kick The Bottles

Some of Easter's more obscure rural traditions have lasted centuries. Even today the Leicestershire village of Hallaton holds an annual 'scramble' for pieces of a huge hare pie, which has been blessed by the local vicar. This is followed by a 'bottle kicking' contest in which two 'bottles' – kegs of beer – are fought over by local residents and those from the neighbouring village of Medbourne. The Easter custom dates back to at least 1796, and has seen its fair share of controversy. In 1878 the *Rutland Echo and Leicestershire Advertiser* said that "drunkenness could be seen in every direction" and the scramble had been "rougher than ever". For years there had been calls for the tradition to be made safer but, the paper added, the effort was "so opposed that nothing came of it".

From broken heads and eggs to beer kegs, Easter has all the festive fun of Christmas, but hopefully with dramatically warmer weather. As a journalist for the *Illustrated London News* quipped in 1844, "'Christmas,' says the proverb, 'comes but once a year.' Easter ought to occur every quarter, for it falls in a pleasant time… 'tis the season for bright looks, glad hearts, and best bibs and tuckers."

CAROLINE ROOPE is a writer and researcher specialising in social history. Her latest book is *The Real DH Lawrence* (Pen & Sword, 2024)

Resources

Take your research further

BOOK

The English Year
Steve Roud
Penguin, 2008
Roud reveals some of the more eccentric customs and traditions of the seasons, including Easter.

MUSEUM

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM
a **Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL**
t 020 7942 2000
e *hello@vam.ac.uk*
w **vam.ac.uk**
The museum's vast collection includes many items related to Easter such as decorative eggs, cards, advertising and transport posters targeting holidaymakers. Some of the objects can be viewed online at **collections.vam.ac.uk**.

WEBSITES

BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE
w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**
For contemporary accounts of Easter traditions, BNA provides a wealth of material dating back to the 18th century. You can search by region for local customs. There is also an article on the website's blog linking to stories charting the origins, history and culture of Easter (**tinyurl.com/bna-easter**).

BRITISH PATHÉ
w **britishpathe.com**
The archive has many short films about this topic such as *Factory Produces Chocolate Easter Eggs* (1935), which depicts WS Shuttleworth and Co Ltd's workers in Bermondsey (**tinyurl.com/bp-fac-eggs**). There is also footage of egg-rolling at Preston from 1929 (**tinyurl.com/bp-egg-roll**).

NATIONAL TRUST COLLECTIONS
w **tinyurl.com/nt-east-egg**
You can view almost 100 items related to Easter eggs from the collections of the National Trust's houses via its online archive.

GETTY IMAGES

MERCHANDISE

BACK ISSUES

If you've missed an issue, here's a chance to complete your collection – and find out how to subscribe on page 22

Issue 223
NOVEMBER 2024
- Online newspapers
- Methodist relations
- Scottish deaths
- East Sussex kin

Issue 224
DECEMBER 2024
- First World War medical records
- DNA advice
- Northamptonshire

Issue 225
CHRISTMAS 2024
- Census websites
- RNLI records
- Irish schools
- Herefordshire kin

Issue 226
JANUARY 2025
- Websites to watch
- Army engineers
- The Great Plague
- Wiltshire kin

Issue 227
FEBRUARY 2025
- Using timelines
- Burial records
- London criminals
- East Yorkshire kin

FROM £4.79

Issue 228
MARCH 2025
- Historic maps
- Prisoners of war
- Aristocratic links
- Northern Ireland

WALL CHART

Commemorate your family tree with our wall chart

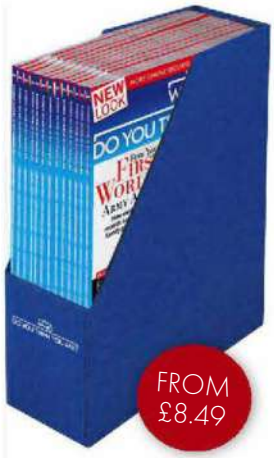
FROM £4

Share your family history with your loved ones by displaying it on our popular wall chart, which measures 864 x 572mm. It is printed on thick, matt paper and comes folded.

MAGAZINE STORAGE

Order a file today to preserve your issues

Keep your collection of *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* in perfect condition by ordering one of our files. Each one stores a year's worth of magazines, and is suitable for issues dated November 2018 onwards.



FROM £8.49

CERTIFICATE BINDER

Keep your precious archive safe for posterity

FROM £12

PLUS ORDER A PACK OF 10 ACID-FREE WALLETS FOR JUST £5

Store your certificates away safely in an exclusive *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* certificate binder, which includes five acid-free plastic A4 wallets to protect your most valuable documents.

SUBSCRIBERS! LOG IN & **SAVE UP TO 25%**

	SUBSCRIBER*			NON-SUBSCRIBER		
	UK	EUROPE	R.O.W.	UK	EUROPE	R.O.W.
BACK ISSUES	£4.79	£5.59	£6.39	£5.99	£7.35	£8.35
CERTIFICATE BINDER	£12	£14.25	£15	£16	£19	£20
	CODE WHCERTBIDA					
WALL CHART	£4	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5
	CODE WHWALLA					
MAGAZINE STORAGE	£8.49	£9.45	£10.80	£9.99	£10.50	£12
	CODE WHMAGBOXA					

CALL **03330 162120**

OR VISIT **OURMEDIASHOP.COM/BACKISSUES-WDYTYA**

OR **OURMEDIASHOP.COM/OFFERS/MERCHANDISE** FOR WALL CHARTS, STORAGE AND BINDERS

*You will need your subscriber number to access discounts online and by phone. UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed-line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm. If calling from overseas, call +44 1604 973728

'A Will From 1793 Uncovered My Catholic Kin'

A visit to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust helped Linda Farrar find ancestors who bravely defied persecution because of their faith. Interview by **Gail Dixon**

Snippets of family stories have always intrigued me. I used to be a part-time lecturer in Ancient History, so delving into our ancestry has been a great joy.

My maiden name was Loxley and all of the ancestors on that line came from Warwickshire, my home county. In the 1980s, I began checking microfiche records for Loxleys who were born locally, and researched at Warwickshire County Record Office (**heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/county-record-office**) when it was still possible to leaf through the actual parish registers.

LINDA FARRAR is retired and lives in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. She has been researching her tree since the mid-1980s

My Brick Wall

The earliest Loxley I could find was my 3x great grandfather William, who married Elizabeth Stinten in 1776. The ceremony took place in the Warwickshire village of Temple Grafton, about five miles west of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the name of the vicar was J Whitmore.

The parish registers for Temple Grafton had been badly damaged by damp over the years. Despite this, I was able to find a burial record for William Loxley dated 9 January 1804.

I checked for earlier Loxleys in the Bishops' Transcripts, but couldn't find any in Temple Grafton. There was a family of Loxleys from Cropthorne in Worcestershire, but they seemed unlikely. This was my brick wall.

My Eureka Moment

A breakthrough came in 2006 when my husband James and I learnt how to use computers for genealogy on a course that was run by the University of Warwick (**warwick.ac.uk**). This highlighted the fact that there were further clues to find on websites and message platforms.

We moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in 2005 and I renewed my research at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (**shakespeare.org.uk**), which has a wealth of records for the town as a whole.

I searched the digitised archives but kept being shown documents for the village of Loxley instead, which is also in Warwickshire. This wasn't helpful, so I decided to check the card indexes.

I was delighted to find a record for William Loxley in connection with the will of Philip Holmes. The document was dated 1793,

Researching Roman Catholic Ancestors

These online resources can help you trace your Catholic relations

Discovery

w **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**

Catholics could incur fines for recusancy, which were levied by the quarter sessions. You can find details at The National Archives in Kew, or search by county.

Findmypast

w **findmypast.co.uk/page/catholic-records**

Millions of records from Roman Catholic archives in Ireland, the USA and Britain have been digitised as part of Findmypast's 'Catholic Heritage Archive' initiative.

GenGuide

w **tinyurl.com/genguide-recusant**

This timeline of legislation indicates how Catholics were restricted – and later tolerated – in 1534–1829. There are references to lists that may help you find your Catholic kin.

and Philip died in 1802 at the age of 94. The will was a gold mine of information, revealing that Philip Holmes had a cousin called Philip Loxley who lived in Studley, Warwickshire, several miles north of Temple Grafton.

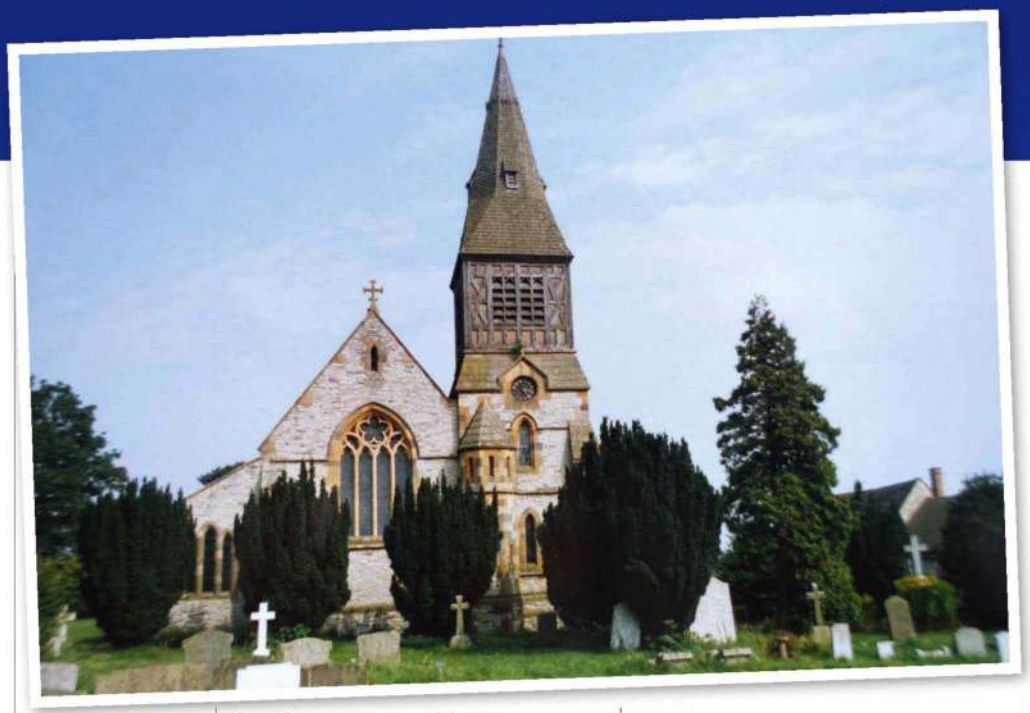
It also stated that Philip was William's father, and mentioned his other children. Philip left a bequest to his cousin Rev John Whitmore too, who probably officiated at William and Elizabeth's wedding.

There were many quests to prove conclusively that these were my Loxleys. I checked the parish records of Studley and the nearby village of Coughton, but couldn't find any baptismal entries for William and his siblings.

His brother John married Mary Davis on 26 October 1789 at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley, which was Church of England. I was intrigued to see that John and Mary also married the same day at Coughton Chapel, which was Roman Catholic. According to the law at that time, this would have been a clandestine marriage.

A startling discovery came when I checked the Church of England parish registers of Coughton. Philip Loxley was specifically noted as having been "born" in 1731 to Richard and Mary Loxley of Coughton. All of his siblings were similarly noted as being born, not baptised.

I discovered why when I found an entry for Philip's older brother Edward that said that he was "Born of Popish Parents". This confirmed my belief that the family were staunchly Roman Catholic, and didn't want their children to be baptised in the Church of England.



Linda took this photo while visiting St Andrew's Parish Church in Temple Grafton

HAVE YOU BROKEN THROUGH A BRICK WALL?

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Coughton was well known for having strong Catholic connections. Robert Catesby, leader of the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605, was the son of Anne Throckmorton whose father owned the manor of Coughton Court. Manorial papers and hearth-tax records from 1670 revealed that my Loxleys lived in a cottage on the estate, which was delightful because Coughton Court is owned by the National Trust and we've visited it many times (**nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/warwickshire/coughton-court**).

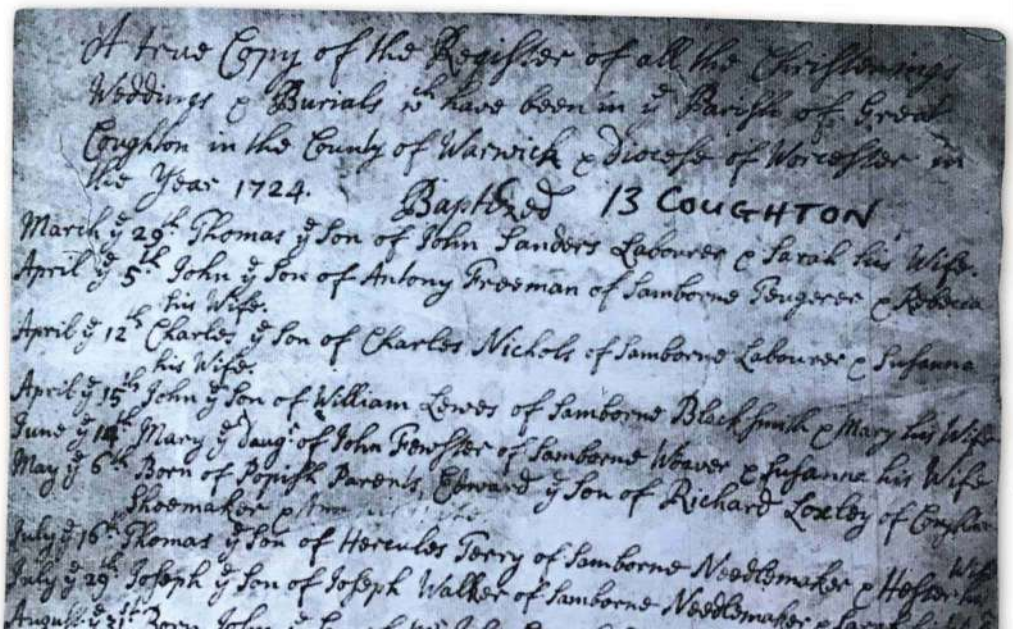
My Breakthrough

Further wills and burial records at Coughton allowed me to trace the Loxley family back through time. Catholics endured persecution for centuries after the Reformation, and could be fined and named on 'recusancy lists' for refusing to accept the Church of England. The Loxleys often appeared in these lists and in the register of Roman Catholics who refused to take the oath of fidelity stipulated in the 1715 Papists Act.

I wasn't surprised to find my 6x great grandfather Edward Locksley on the list of recusants from Warwick quarter sessions for not attending the Church of England three Sundays in a row. He lived in Studley in 1683, and later moved to Coughton.

Edward's niece Dorothy married Richard Holmes, and it was their son Philip who left the pivotal will. This proved the connection between the Loxley and the Holmes families.

I wholeheartedly thank the vicar of Coughton for recording all of the family births in his parish, even if they weren't Church of England. It has been a wonderful and unexpected journey.



A true Copy of the Register of all the Christenings Weddings & Burials wch have been in the Parish of Great Coughton in the County of Warwick & Diocese of Worcester in the Year 1724. Baptized 13 COUGHTON

March the 29th Thomas the Son of John Sanders Labourer & Sarah his Wife.

April the 5th John the Son of Antony Freeman of Samborne Bugerer & Rebecca his Wife.

April the 12th Charles the Son of Charles Nichols of Samborne Labourer & Susanna his Wife.

April the 15th John the Son of William Lowes of Samborne Blacksmith & Mary his Wife.

June the 14th Mary the Dau. of John Fowler of Samborne Weaver & Susanna his Wife.

May the 6th Born of Popish Parents, Edward the Son of Richard Loxley of Coughton Shoemaker & Mary.

July the 16th Thomas the Son of Hercules Terry of Samborne Needlemaker & Hester his Wife.

July the 29th Joseph the Son of Joseph Walker of Samborne Needlemaker & Hester his Wife.

August the 31st Born John

Linda discovered that Edward Loxley was "Born of Popish Parents" from a Bishop's Transcript

Reader Tips

Linda has this advice for other readers of *WDYTYA? Magazine*

- Check parish records carefully. Some ministers recorded all of the births in the parish, as well as the baptisms.
- It's worth visiting libraries and archives around the county where your ancestors lived – don't just rely on online records.
- Wills are a very important source of information.

Around Britain

Hampshire

Jonathan Scott visits Jane Austen's home county 250 years after her birth

Nelson's flagship HMS *Victory* is now a museum in Portsmouth

The amount of evidence that survives for researching the life of Jane Austen and her family illustrates the kinds of sources that are open to every family historian who can trace their roots back to 18th-century Hampshire.

Jane was baptised in Steventon in 1775, and would spend most of her life in Hampshire. Her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, was published in 1811, although it was in 1796 that she began work on *First Impressions*, which would eventually become better known as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).

Hampshire Archives in Winchester (**hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/archives**) preserves a wealth of material relating to the author, her family and the world they inhabited. Her father George was the rector of Steventon and she features in two local parish registers, once for her christening and once as a mischievous teenager, when she used the front pages of the marriage register to record her entirely fictional marriages to a Henry Frederic Howard Fitzwilliam, Edmund Arthur William Mortimer and Jack Smith.

Jane's brother Edward inherited the estates of the Knight family of Chawton in Hampshire and Godmersham in Kent. The family archive, again held at Hampshire Record Office, includes hand-drawn 18th-century estate maps of

GETTY IMAGES

the area around Chawton. There's also the Austen-Leigh archive, which includes letters and diaries written by relations and friends who would have known Jane throughout her life. And as Jane's father and two brothers were Hampshire clergymen, records of their appointments survive among the Winchester diocesan records.

Historic Maps

Sarah Lewin, the record office's information and archives manager, says, "Printed and manuscript maps of Hampshire, together with topographical prints and other sources, allow us to reconstruct the Hampshire of Jane Austen's day, the grand houses she visited, such as the The Vyne in Sherborne St John and Hackwood Park in Winslade, and the country towns she would have known, such as Basingstoke, Overton and Alton."

Both the parish registers mentioned above are on Ancestry, which has about six million register entries (1536–1921), just under one million marriages and banns (1754–1921), and a collection of Methodist registers: **ancestry.co.uk/search/places/united_kingdom/england/hampshire.**

Wills before 1858 were generally proved in the church courts, and the site also has wills, inventories and administrations proved in the church courts of Winchester Diocese stretching back to the 14th century.

GETTY IMAGES

Southampton Docks in the 19th century

Free Online Records Indexes, parish registers, burials, directories – and the Hampshire Victoria County History

Victoria County History

w **tinyurl.com/ihr-vic-hants**

Here you will find links to the five-volume Victoria County History for Hampshire – the first volume was published in 1900.

Parish Registers

w **tinyurl.com/fs-hants-online**

The FamilySearch wiki lists online resources for the county. FamilySearch's own material include parish registers from the deaneries of Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth.

Burials

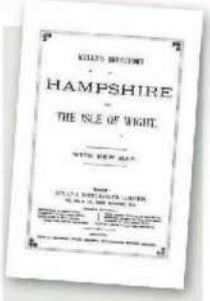
w **tinyurl.com/eastleigh-gov-burials**

Search for burials in three cemeteries in the borough of Eastleigh. A tool for Fareham is at **tinyurl.com/fareham-gov-burials**.

Isle Of Wight Indexes

w **tinyurl.com/iow-indexes**

The website of the Isle of Wight Record Office has finding aids and name indexes for pubs, apprentices, ships, the 1841 census, a marriage register index and a list of paupers.



Directories

w **bit.ly/special-hants**

The University of Leicester's website Special Collections Online includes several volumes of digitised trade directories for Hampshire, dating from 1784 to 1919.

More records are in the wings too. A batch of cemetery registers are due to be released on Ancestry around the middle of the year. In the meantime you can already search the website for burials in Bishopstoke, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Fareham, Locks Heath, Portchester, Sarisbury, Stubbington and Titchfield.

There are some gaps to watch out for – parish registers from Southampton and the Isle of Wight aren't available via Ancestry, and those for Portsmouth are on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk/discover/birth-marriage-death-and-parish-records/parish-registers/hampshire-portsmouth-parish-registers-browse**). Both FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) and FreeREG (**freereg.org.uk**) are useful for Isle of Wight kin – the latter has 23,707 records at time of writing. And FamilySearch boasts two important Hampshire collections, including roughly one million records from Portsmouth History Centre (**librariesandarchives.portsmouth.gov.uk/archive-service-and-history-centre/**), covering the deaneries of Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth. Finally parish material transcribed by the Hampshire Genealogical Society (**hgs-familyhistory.com**) can be accessed via FHS Online (**fhs-online.co.uk**), which brings together 16 databases from family history societies across the UK.

Cemetery registers are due for release on Ancestry in the middle of the year

Southampton Archives (**southampton.gov.uk/libraries/southampton-archives**) in the city's Civic Centre is home to the unique '1454 terrier', a list of properties complete with owners and ▶

tenants that represents one of the earliest surviving surveys of a medieval town. You can also access transcribed and indexed parish records for the city here, the earliest surviving example from St Michael's Church in 1552, alongside parish-chest records that include churchwarden and overseers' accounts, poor rates, settlement certificates and items relating to the administration of church schools and charities.

Maritime Records

Southampton and Portsmouth archives both reflect their cities' maritime heritage. Southampton looks after the Central Index Register of Seamen, which comprises more than 1.25 million record cards of those serving on board British-registered vessels between 1918 and 1941, and is also on Findmypast (**search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/britain-merchant-seamen-1918-1941**). There are also crew lists for Southampton-registered vessels (1863–1913), records of various shipping lines including Shaw Savill & Albion and Furness Withy Shipping, and there's a Local History & Maritime Digital Archive through which you can search more than 10,000 photos, maps, audio clips and documents (**southampton.gov.uk/libraries/southampton-archives/plimsoll**).

Crew lists and agreements for merchant ships registered at Portsmouth and East Cowes (1861–1913) survive today at Portsmouth History Centre. Other useful sources held here are already available via Findmypast, including local directories, cemetery records, rate books, First World War military tribunals, police record books (1908–1924), hospital and workhouse records, and unindexed court records.

If you're researching individuals who lived on the Isle of Wight, the record office in Newport (**iow.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-heritage/record-office-and-archive/record-office/using-the-record-office/**) also has some useful online tools. The Alehouse Database, for example, records details of licences issued at the Newport Borough quarter sessions (1766–1819). Arranged by year and name of pub, it gives not only the name of the victualler but also the 'sureties' – "those who stood as security for the proper performance of the victualler's duties".

Another example is the database of Apprenticeship Indentures (1689–1835), but keep in mind that this is a finding aid, not a complete transcription. So while you can view the name of the apprentice and master, a year and catalogue reference, you will need to see the original documents to get further information such as the trade they were learning.

Finally, as you would expect there are a wealth of Jane Austen celebrations planned for this year. The county archives team are contributing material to an exhibition being staged by Hampshire Cultural Trust. 'Beyond the Bonnets: Working Women in Jane Austen's Novels' takes place in Winchester between 26 July and 2 November – you can find out more at **hampshireculture.org.uk/event/beyond-bonnets-working-women-jane-austens-novels**. And some county libraries will be hosting a touring 'Two and a Half Centuries of Austen' exhibition in partnership with the museum Jane Austen's House (**janeaustens.house**), the home in Chawton where she spent the last eight years of her life.

Jane Austen's house in Chawton has been converted into a museum

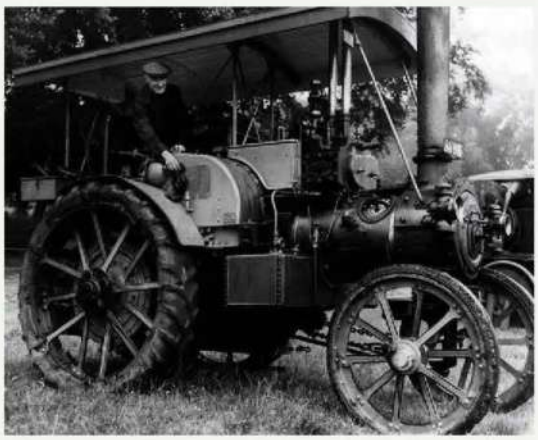
WATCH OUT!

The administrative county of Hampshire was known as 'the County of Southampton' between 1889 and 1959, so the word "Southampton" in a record may not refer to the city.

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Taskers Of Andover

Did your relation work for this engineering firm?



A 1925 Taskers engine at a rally in Chester-le-Street, 1957

Taskers of Andover was established in 1813, and became a leading manufacturer of agricultural implements such as threshing machines, engines and vehicles. The firm produced a popular line of tractors called Little Giants, then turned to making munitions during the First World War, and during the Second World War built low-loading trailers that were vital for transporting fighter aircraft. You can find out more about the company's many incarnations on Hampshire Cultural Trust's site at **collections.hampshireculture.org.uk/topic/taskers-andover**, and see some of its vehicles at Milestones Museum in Basingstoke (**milestonesmuseum.org.uk**).

GETTY IMAGES

HAMPSHIRE DIRECTORY

ARCHIVES & LIBRARIES

Hampshire Archives

a **Hampshire Record Office, Sussex Street, Winchester SO23 8TH**
t 01962 846154
w **hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/archives**

The website has been given a refresh since our last visit in March 2021, with getting-started guides for family, house and local history. There's an excellent online catalogue, and in the 'Popular records' section you'll find an A-to-Z of the most important sources held here. The record office is also home to the Wessex Film and Sound Archive, which preserves more than 22,000 cinefilms and video recordings as well as oral history recordings. You can watch 327 videos at **youtube.com/@WessexFilmArchive/videos**.

Isle Of Wight Record Office

a **26 Hillside, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 2EB**
t 01983 823820
e *record.office@iow.gov.uk*
w **iow.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-heritage/record-office-and-archive/**

Here you'll find parish, estate, family, business, school and local-government records. There are microfiche copies of sources held elsewhere – such as wills proved in the Diocese of Winchester – and online indexes. Names in parish registers from 1539–1900 are recorded in a card index in the searchroom.

Portsmouth History Centre

a **Portsmouth Central Library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2DX**
t 023 9268 8046
e *portsmouthhistorycentre@portsmouthcc.gov.uk*
w **librariesandarchives.portsmouth.gov.uk/archive-service-and-history-centre/**

The history centre preserves records from councils, churches, hospitals, businesses, groups and societies, families and individuals. Some of the material here is also on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), including crew lists and agreements, cemetery records, parish registers, and workhouse admissions and discharges.

Southampton Archives

a **Civic Centre, Civic Centre Road, Southampton SO14 7LY**
t 023 8083 2251
e *archives@southampton.gov.uk*
w **southampton.gov.uk/libraries/southampton-archives/**

Here you can access indexes to wills, electoral registers, street directories from c1840, census returns for the city, plus parish registers (on fiche), newspapers, maps and illustrations, and the Central Index Register of Merchant Seamen. You can also search the extensive Local History & Maritime Digital Archive at **southampton.gov.uk/libraries/southampton-archives/plimsoll**.

University Of Southampton Archives And Special Collections

a **Hartley Library, University Road, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ**
t 023 8059 2721
e *archives@soton.ac.uk*
w **southampton.ac.uk/archives**

The university holds the Anglo-Jewish Archives, the papers of the 1st Duke of Wellington, and material relating to Basque child refugees from Spain's civil war.

GROUPS & SOCIETIES

Hampshire Cultural Trust

w **hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk**

Find out more about museums and attractions across the county.

Hampshire Genealogical Society

w **hgs-familyhistory.com**

The society has regional branches across the county, and runs a research centre at Hampshire Record Office. Its website has a members' area, an online shop and some free indexes. You can also search an index to parish registers via FHS Online at **fhs-online.co.uk/search/advanced/parish-hampshire-gs/baptism**, although you have to subscribe to see the full details.

Isle Of Wight Family History Society

w **www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk**

The website has free indexes of births, marriages and deaths, and a members-only database of memorial inscriptions and details of Royal Navy men (1853–1928).

Ryde Social Heritage Group

w **rshg.org.uk**

The society's website includes a detailed timeline of Ryde on the north-east coast of the Isle of Wight, and a database of graves.

MUSEUMS

Jane Austen's House

a **Chawton GU34 1SD**
t 01420 83262
e *enquiries@janeaustens.house*
w **janeaustens.house**

The author's former home is now Grade I-listed.

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

a **Visitor Centre, Victory Gate, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LJ**
t 023 9283 9766
e *enquiries@nmrn.org.uk*
w **historicdockyard.co.uk**

The site is home to attractions that include HMS *Victory*, the *Mary Rose* and the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The D-Day Story

a **Clarence Esplanade, Portsmouth PO5 3NT**
t 023 9288 2555
e *theddaystory@portsmouthcc.gov.uk*
w **theddaystory.com**

Discover the personal stories behind the Normandy landings.

The Rifleman's Museum

a **Peninsula Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester SO23 8TS**
t 01962 828549
e *office@riflemansmuseum.co.uk*
w **riflemansmuseum.co.uk**

Find out about the heritage of the Rifles and earlier rifles regiments.

WEBSITES

Ancestry

w **bit.ly/anc-hants**

The material here includes some six million parish registers and a collection of cemetery registers.

Findmypast

w **bit.ly/fmp-ports-reg**

You can browse parish registers from Portsmouth on this page.

Soldiers' magazine, 1915–1919

Tim Knebel from Sheffield City Archives shares a magazine created in the trenches of the Western Front

Interview By Rosemary Collins

On the Western Front of the First World War, the conflict rapidly devolved into trench warfare, with both sides bedded in and little progress being made. To relieve the daily fear and boredom, some soldiers began producing trench newspapers and magazines – often satirical publications used for entertainment and morale-boosting. Sheffield City Archives holds the back issues of one such publication – *The Leadswinger*. Archivist Tim Knebel tells us more about the magazine and the talented men who made it.

The *Leadswinger* illustrates the close camaraderie forged between servicemen

What Was The Origin Of *The Leadswinger*?

The Leadswinger was the trench magazine of the 3rd West Riding Field Ambulance Service, a Royal Army Medical Corps unit raised in Sheffield that provided front-line medical support to troops in the First World War, including at the bloody battles of the Somme and Passchendaele. There were 15 issues produced between September 1915 and March 1919, all written and circulated in the trenches, field hospitals etc, which aimed to chronicle the "lighter side of the hardships and trials endured in the service of king and country". The original copies are in a volume at Sheffield City Archives. *The Leadswinger* predates the best-known British trench magazine *The Wipers Times*, first produced in February 1916.

Why Did You Choose It?

First, it's strikingly visual with beautifully designed covers and, on the inside, inventive cartoons and drawings, often interwoven with literary or artistic allusions and quotations.

The articles are very engaging too with witty sketches (often poking fun at fellow soldiers and superiors), poems, songs, short stories, regimental news and even football results.

But, among all of the light-hearted material, there are regular fatality lists and moving "in memoriam" pieces for fallen comrades.

There's also a mystique to *The Leadswinger*. Its young contributors hid behind pen names, and I wanted to try to unmask the men behind the magazine – to learn who they were, where they came from and what happened to them after the war. I discovered many fascinating stories.

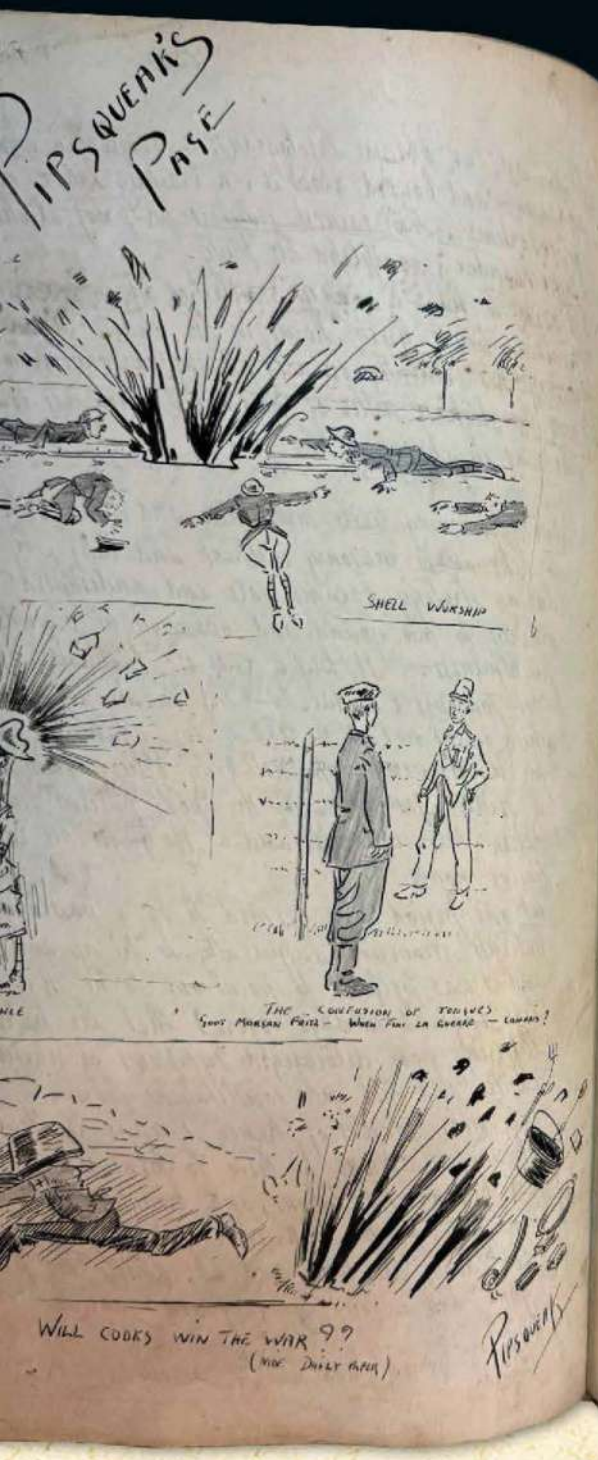
One of the most tragic figures was the chairman of the *Leadswinger* committee. Captain William Barnsley Allen (1892–1933), who wrote under the name 'Jack Point', was a prizewinning medical student and had only just graduated as a doctor when war broke out. He won the Victoria Cross for saving multiple lives under heavy bombardment on the Somme in September 1916. Before the war ended he was wounded multiple times, gassed and blinded for six months. He then battled postwar alcohol and drug addictions, culminating in death from an accidental opium overdose aged 41.

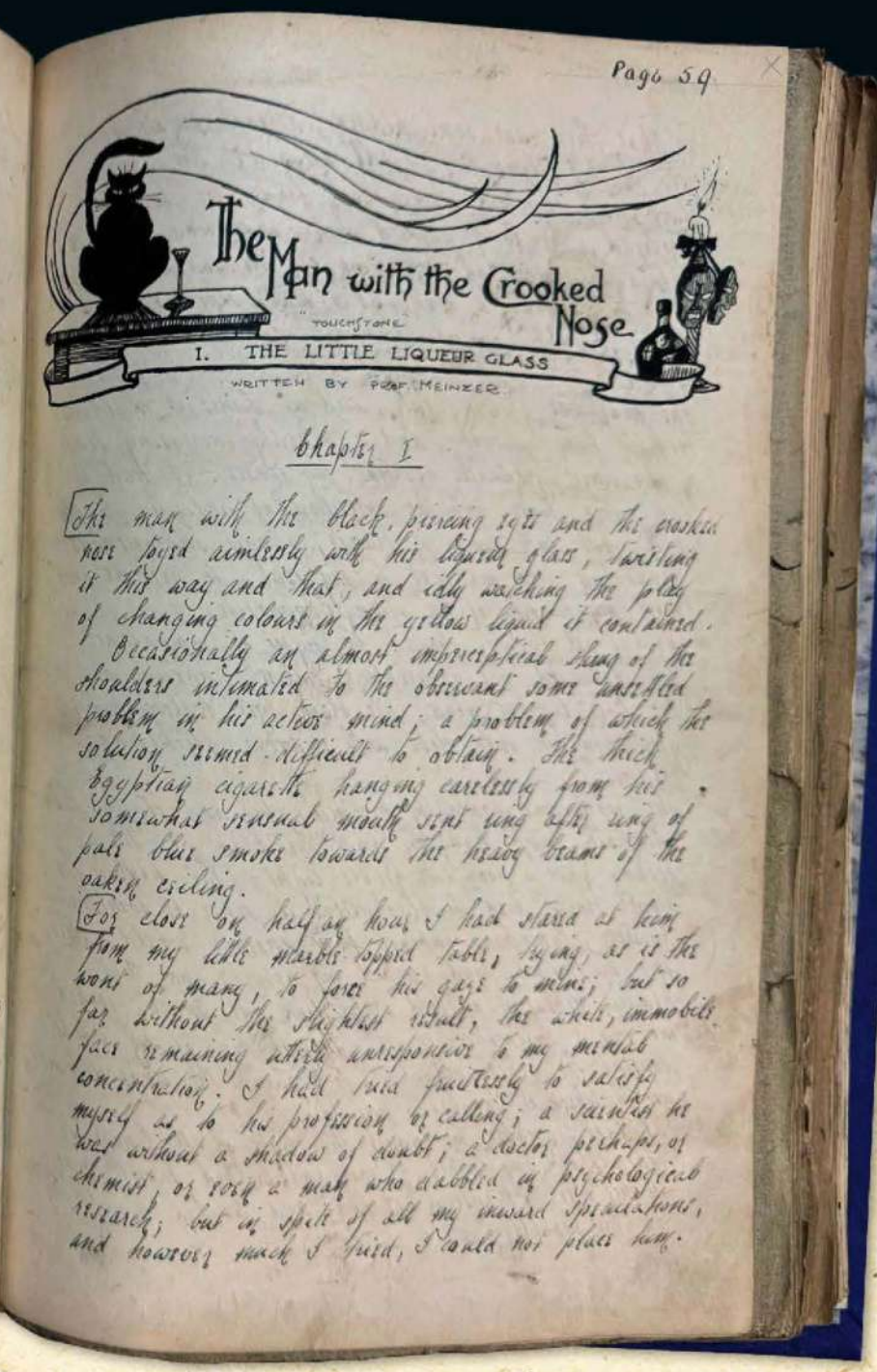
Thankfully there were more favourable outcomes for other contributors, and *The Leadswinger* proved to be a springboard for creative careers and activities after the war. For example, Private William Frederick Northend (1887–1968), the magazine's advert and design artist who used the pen name 'Dug Out', was one of two brothers on the committee, and responsible for the magazine's beautiful cover designs. After the war he joined his family's

Visit Us

Sheffield City Archives
a 52 Shoreham Street, Sheffield S1 4SP
t 0114 203 9395
w sheffield.gov.uk/libraries-archives/access-archives-local-studies-library

The archive holds documents, books, maps, photos, and sound and film recordings relating to the history of Sheffield. It is open Monday, Tuesday and Saturday, 9.30am–5.30pm.





successful printing business JW Northend Ltd, which is still based in Sheffield today.

But he also used his talents to help with landscape and historic-building preservation projects, including the campaign to save the Derwent Packhorse Bridge when the area was due to be submerged under Ladybower Reservoir, which was built between 1935 and 1943.

The magazine's secretary, who used the name 'The Scribe', was Teddy Topham (1894–1966), who grew up in a ramshackle two-up two-down terraced house in central Sheffield and left school at 13. After the war he found success as a journalist, and was secretary of the National Union of Journalists' Sheffield branch.

The most exciting discovery was uncovering the life of the magazine's chief cartoonist 'Pipsqueak', Alfred Jackson (1893–1971). Alfred also came from very modest beginnings, leaving school at 13, and, after a spell as an apprentice to a pawnbroker, he became a struggling musician, playing the violin in Sheffield's silent cinemas until he enlisted when war broke out. When he returned to civilian life he became a full-time artist. He married Teddy's sister Eva (1902–2002) and the couple later moved to Kent, where she taught Classics and Latin and Jackson drew for *Punch*.

I discovered as well that Alfred helped to launch the career of Sir Quentin Blake. Blake was one of Eva's pupils, and she introduced him to her husband after spotting some of his doodles. Alfred mentored Blake, and set him on the path to becoming one of our best-loved illustrators. So we can trace Blake's influences back to Pipsqueak's cartoons.

What Does The Magazine Tell Us About The War?

The Leadswinger illustrates the close camaraderie forged between servicemen from different backgrounds, and how, out of all the destruction, there can be a strong desire to create and seek a diversion from the struggles and horrors.

What Other Collections Do You Hold?

Sheffield City Archives has diaries, correspondence, minutes, accounts, maps and photos back to the mid-12th century. Our collections encompass records of Sheffield City Council, schools, hospitals, police, courts, coroners, churches, landed estates, businesses, sporting/recreational clubs and voluntary societies, and records of private individuals and families.

REVIEWS

The latest books on history and genealogy, plus apps, podcasts and websites

Captain De Havilland's Moth
Tales Of High Adventure From The Golden Age Of Aviation

Alexander Norman
Abacus, 336 pages, £25

AVIATION HISTORY

Lady Heath, formerly Sophie Elliot-Lynn, pilots her Moth

The DH 60 Moth was a simple biplane, robust and easy to fly. Hundreds were made by Geoffrey de Havilland between the wars. Introduced in 1925, the Moth was meant to popularise flying. The aircraft cost £650, little more than a luxury car, although its running costs were considerably greater. If your ancestor flew with the Royal Air Force in the Second World War, it's likely that he did some of his training in a Gipsy Moth.

This could have been a very technical book full of information about flues and struts. Inevitably there's some of that, but mostly Alexander Norman writes about the men and women who flew the aircraft around the world. What a rage of eccentrics and obsessives they were! It seems that almost everybody with a few thousand pounds to spare and a sense of adventure bought a plane, from the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) to Sophie Elliot-Lynn, who pioneered women's athletics before falling in love with flying.

This was the age of races across Africa and to Australia via India, where pilots and their passengers had to be resourceful in dealing with natural hazards and constant breakdowns. But help always seemed to be at hand from local planters and RAF engineers. The most heroic pilots were undoubtedly three Indian students who flew from Karachi to Croydon and back again, using a school atlas to navigate.

This is a great piece of social history about a world that has completely vanished. What took weeks of danger and discomfort can now be covered in a few hours by passenger jet.

Simon Fowler's latest book *How to Research Your Second World War Ancestors* will be published by The History Press on 12 June

FLIGHT COLLECTION/TOPFOTO

DIGITAL PICKS

Rosemary Collins highlights three digital resources that caught our eye this month

PODCAST

Step Into The Past

findmypast.co.uk/page/podcast

The second series of *Step Into the Past*, produced by Findmypast in collaboration with the National Trust, is available now. The three episodes see historian and broadcaster Prof Suzannah Lipscomb visit Derbyshire's Calke Abbey, Avebury Manor in Wiltshire and back-to-backs in Birmingham, and interview people with family links to each location. Free.

WATCH

American Ancestors

tinyurl.com/yt-american-ancestors

American Ancestors is the website of the New England Historic Genealogical Society (**americanancestors.org**), and its YouTube channel is full of professional talks. Many will appeal even if you're not based in the USA, such as 'Choosing a DNA Test for Your Research Goals' and 'Ten Steps to Writing & Publishing Your Family History'. Free.

LISTEN

Shadow Of War: A Tainted Anatomy

tinyurl.com/bbc-snds-tntd

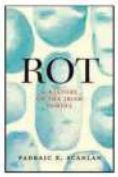
In this documentary that aired on BBC Radio 4 in January, anatomist and forensic anthropologist Prof Sue Black investigates the case of five British POWs in the Second World War who died in captivity – and whose tissue, including their brains, was kept by the Nazis for use in medical research. She also speaks to members of the men's families.

A family in the ruins of their house in Killarney, County Kerry

Rot A History Of The Irish Famine

IRISH HISTORY

Padraic X Scanlan *Robinson, 352 pages, £25*



Irish genealogists often have to be reminded, when encountering the baptism of a child in 1846 or 1847, say, that the birth took place during the Great Famine (1845–1849). The child was born into a moment of catastrophe, affecting all parts of the island.

In *Rot*, Padraic X Scanlan sets out a forensic and damning account of the imperialist capitalist system that hobbled the Irish on the eve of the crisis. Attributing the Famine to the market capitalism that drove the 18th- and 19th-century expansion and consolidation of the British Empire, *Rot* offers an opportunity to abandon the reductive idea that the Great Famine was a conscious act of cruelty, or even genocide. Instead, Scanlan proffers insight into the impact of an almost evangelical adherence to an economic theory that did not allow for an adequate response to the human suffering that ensued, when the staple diet of the population rotted in the ground.

Scanlan's outrage simmers just beneath this thoughtful and extensively researched text, which is laden with statistical detail but coloured with quotes from letters, travelogues, diaries and newspapers.

Nicola Morris **is an Irish genealogist and the director of Timeline Research (timeline.ie)**

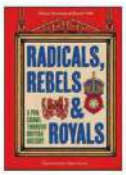
Reader Review YOUR CHANCE TO ASSESS THE LATEST BOOKS

Radicals, Rebels And Royals

A Pub Crawl Through British History

SOCIAL HISTORY

Martyn Routledge And Elspeth Wills *Pavilion, 192 pages, £16.99*



This is a book about pub names. The authors present a random list of 70 pubs, each with a connection to British history. The format for each includes a note of trivia, while each pub is accompanied by a pub-sign illustration from Adam Forster. There are many more royals than radicals or rebels!

The selection includes some very well-known pubs – Nottingham's Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem from 1189, and London's ornate Black Friar, built in 1875. Most, however, are chosen for their name only. Historical names include the William the Conqueror, Robert the Bruce, Wat Tyler, Guy Fawkes and Nell Gwynn. You will learn that some of the most common names like the Star and Garter, Rose and Crown, and the Red Lion have royal origins.

One of the pubs featured in the book

This is a book for anyone fascinated by names. Pubs can point to the social history of an area in terms of families of local influence, or trades connected to local industries. Not a lot to read but an enjoyable pub crawl nonetheless.

Steve Coyne, Coventry

Steve is the author of a book on the Coyne family and has been researching his tree for 30 years

Join Us... **Send us an email if you'd like to join our reviewing panel**
e ***wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk***

GETTY IMAGES

TV & RADIO

Jonathan Wright previews upcoming programmes on history and family history

What They Found

BBC Two and iPlayer
Monday 7 April (to be confirmed)

On the afternoon of 15 April 1945, British troops liberated Bergen-Belsen. While the soldiers would have been wary, if only because they knew that there were cases of typhus at the camp, nothing could have prepared them for the depravity ahead. BBC war correspondent Richard Dimbleby described what he saw: "Here over an acre of ground lay dead and dying people. You could not see which was which."

Among those who entered the notorious concentration camp 80 years ago were two cameramen serving in the Army Film and Photographic Unit (AFPU), Sergeants Mike Lewis and Bill Lawrie.

The footage that they recorded that day would play a key role in showing the world the horrors of the Holocaust.

In the 1950s, the British War Office deposited their footage with the Imperial War Museum (IWM). In the 1980s, as part of a project to gather the testimony of AFPU cameramen, IWM curator Kay Gladstone interviewed both men.

The first-ever documentary from Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes, *What They Found* uses these interviews and the haunting black-and-white footage the men recorded to take viewers back to a time when the wider world had yet to learn of the full extent of Nazi atrocities.

"The sights captured by the AFPU cameramen who were present at the liberation of Bergen-Belsen have left an indelible mark on the world," explained Dr James Bulgin, head of public history at IWM, when the film was announced. "*What They Found* uses IWM's collections to give those scenes critical context, describing them from the unique perspective of those who witnessed them first hand. The film is a searing and timely reminder that each person caught up in this terrible history experienced it as an individual."

Prisoners at Bergen-Belsen after the British Army seized control in mid-April 1945

DNA Trail: The Promise

BBC Sounds

BBC journalist Laura Ancell's dad, Billy, knew little about his own biological father, a man he thought he had tracked down but who, following the briefest of contacts, never replied to letters. When Billy died in 2006, Laura and her mother, Jayne, made a deathbed promise to track down Billy's lost family.

This was the starting point for an odyssey that would take the pair thousands of miles across the world in search of the family of William Anderson, who served in the UK during the Second World War as part of the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Their podcast brilliantly captures the frustrations of researching a family tree and, rather unexpectedly, culminates in Ancell campaigning to change an unjust law in New Zealand.

Elsewhere, BBC Sounds also has a bonus episode of Jenny Kleeman's Radio 4 series *The Gift* about people whose lives have been changed by a DNA test. Here, she follows a family's efforts to find a relative they believe was switched at birth.

Simon Schama: The Holocaust – 80 Years On

BBC Two and iPlayer
April

The Holocaust is most often framed as the result of the Nazis' obsessive antisemitism. Yet you can also see it as a crime whose perpetrators, or at the very least those who turned away from what was happening, lived in different countries throughout Europe. This is the perspective taken by Sir Simon Schama in a new documentary to mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the last concentration camps.

Emphasising the personal nature of the programme, Schama visits mass killing sites in Lithuania, the home country of his mother's family. He also travels to Auschwitz-Birkenau for the first time, a hugely emotional experience. Throughout, he asks difficult questions such as,"Why did fewer Jews survive in the Netherlands, a country famed for its liberalism and tolerance, than in any other occupied country in Western Europe?"

There are tales of heroism and resistance too, and a moving interview with the then 98-year-old historian and journalist Marian Turski, who survived Auschwitz-Birkenau and a 'Death March' that ended with his internment at Buchenwald, but passed away in February 2025.

Titanic: Ship Of Dreams

BBC Sounds
Tuesday 8 April

Siblings and actors Paul and Stephen McGann have a family link to RMS *Titanic*. As Paul relates as narrator of *Titanic: Ship of Dreams*, their great uncle, James, known as 'Titanic' McGann, was a coal trimmer on the liner. Stephen, we learn, has researched James' life story, which began in the slums of Liverpool where he was born to a family that fled Ireland's Great Famine in the mid-19th century.

This 13-part series retells the story of the doomed ship, and is full of telling details, social history – and demythologising.

GETTY IMAGES

NEXT MONTH

Our May issue goes on sale on **Tuesday 22 April**

VE DAY ON THE HOME FRONT

The joy, the tears and the celebrations

VE DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

PLUS

Could You Survive The Hazards Of The 17th Century?

Explore Norfolk Roots With Our Expert's Guide

Trace Your Family In The English Civil War

Find Masters And Mates Certificates For Merchant Navy Kin

THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

How to research troops who came home – or didn't

GETTY IMAGES

'My Great Grandmother Is My Inspiration'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Italian immigrants to the USA faced huge challenges but many thrived in their new life, including Rose Pannitto whose legacy lives on today. By **Gail Dixon**

Audra's forebear Rose with her husband and children

The sight of US shores could inspire a surge of feelings in immigrants, including hope, trepidation and joy. It's also likely that they felt an enormous sense of relief after an arduous journey in cramped steerage, where sickness inevitably claimed many lives.

Maria Rosa Pannitto (known as Rose) was among the vast numbers of Italians who immigrated to the USA during the 19th and early 20th centuries. She is the great grandmother of Audra Carapella Crans-Henderson, who cherishes her as a role model.

"Rose was born on 17 June 1870 in the *comune* of Campobasso, southern Italy," Audra explains. "She grew up in the town of Monacilioni, which was an area of extreme poverty with few opportunities.

"Rose, her sister Marie and her brother-in-law Nicholas Grimaldi immigrated to the USA in around 1890, searching for a better way of life. Their departure also alleviated their parents' financial burden. I find it fascinating that my great grandmother emigrated as a young single woman who didn't speak a word of English and had to navigate US culture."

Many Italians found themselves living in overpriced slums, working for a pittance, suffering prejudice and missing home. Understandably, they clustered together in tight-knit communities known as 'Little Italies'.

Rose moved to Apalachin in New York State, where she married Audra's great grandfather Cosimo Iosue in 1893.

The couple had four children, including Audra's grandmother Louise, and a set of twins who died of typhus in infancy.

Further tragedy came when Cosimo died in 1900 at the age of 32 from typhoid pneumonia. Rose was alone in a foreign land with children to raise.

The following year, she married Angelo Carapella, a fellow newcomer who had opened a grocery store in the city of Corning, New York State.

"Rose had another four children with Angelo, and helped him to run the store. She was also a midwife, and delivered a lot of babies in Corning."

"Rose and Angelo worked hard to develop a thriving business, and were able to buy buildings and large amounts of land around Corning," Audra reveals.

"They became a prominent, wealthy couple and were highly respected within the community. It was a remarkable achievement for people who had immigrated just a few years earlier.

"Rose was a strong matriarch and encouraged her children to attend church every week and complete their education. She excelled by building a beautiful and hard-working family.

"I never met my great grandmother, but relatives have told me that Rose had amazing energy even into her nineties. She would walk through the neighbourhood to visit friends and family, or to the local store and carry her groceries home.

"Rose was usually busy but to relax she would crochet beautiful, intricate doilies. She loved her family, and passed on to them a wealth of knowledge of times past, a simpler time.

"My great grandmother loved being outside and keeping active. I believe this is why she lived to be 90, passing away in New York on 9 January 1961."

Audra shares a number of distinct similarities with Rose.

"I grew up in Campbell, New York State, which was quite a poor area, and went in search of opportunities," she remembers. "I joined the military when I was 17 years old, and lived independently. My family couldn't afford to send me to college, but I was able to attend thanks to military scholarships and managed to earn three college degrees. This greatly helped my parents financially.

"I too live far from family on the West Coast of the USA, and have faced challenges branching out on my own. I often look at photographs of Rose to remind myself that I can make it like my great grandmother did."

Rose emigrated as a young single woman who didn't speak English

AUDRA CARAPELLA CRANS-HENDERSON lives in Olympia, Washington, USA, where she works as a federal technician

WHO'S YOUR HERO?

Share your family hero with us and they could appear in the magazine!

Each month we'll award our favourite a year's subscription to **findmypast.co.uk** worth £199.99.

Find my past

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

This was Sylvia's promise to you...

A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And surviving a stroke is just the start of a long and gruelling recovery journey. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

You can promise future generations a world where researchers discover new treatments and surgeries, and stroke survivors and their families have the support to find the strength and determination they need to find their way back to life.

Your promise today gives strength for tomorrow. Please, leave a gift in your Will to the Stroke Association.

Find out how by calling 020 7566 1505 or email legacy@stroke.org.uk or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

Finding **strength** through **support**

Stroke Association

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 369), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.

VE DAY

Discover life on the path to victory

To celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.
A special offer for 'Who Do You Think You Are?' readers.

Save 30% on our most popular subscriptions.

Just scan the QR code or visit
www.findmypast.co.uk/subscribe and use
discount code VEDAY80 at the checkout.

30% OFF

Visit Findmypast.co.uk

SCAN HERE

Offer valid from 24th March - 30th June 2025. Terms and conditions apply. See www.findmypast.co.uk

Find my past